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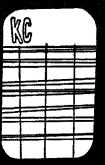
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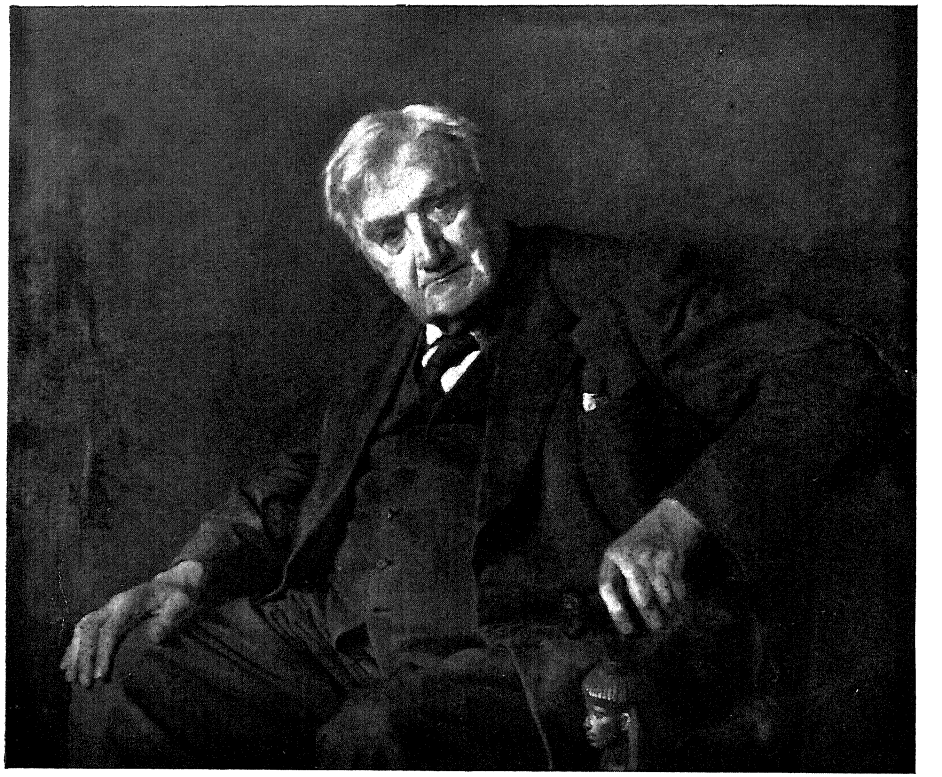
THE MUSIC OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS



RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, O.M.
The portrait by Sir Gerald Kelly

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THE MUSIC OF
Ralph Vaughan Williams

BY

FRANK HOWES

Geoffrey Cumberlege
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PREFACE

THIS book is different in aim from the two recent studies of Vaughan Williams by the late Hubert Foss (1949) and Dr. Percy Young (1953). It was virtually completed before the latter was published. Foss's book was not analytical and contained no examples in music-type. It did, however, contain a chapter of biography—from the composer's own pen. Young's book may be described as a critical study. Mine is neither biographical nor critical but is wholly expository. Its method is that of conventional analysis, but its intention is in general to relate technical features to aesthetic effect. I believe this to be a sound approach to the criticism of a work of art: the listener is confronted with a piece of music, he reacts to it and then proceeds to some sort of judgement on it; if he can indicate a technical feature in support of his particular verdict on this or that aspect of the work he makes his criticism so much the more precise. Contrariwise, if he notices some novel procedure, he will ask himself 'Now why that?' and the answer will give him an understanding of the composer's expressive purpose. This then, though it sounds rather pompous to apply to a book of glorified programme notes, is intended as a study in applied aesthetics.

The origin of the book is simpler still. Many years ago I wrote two short booklets (now out of print) in the Oxford University Press's 'The Musical Pilgrim' series in continuation of Mr. Alan Dickinson's *An Introduction to the Music of R. Vaughan Williams*. It is impossible to keep up with the composer's astonishing productivity and rather than pursue him a lap behind with a fourth 'Pilgrim' it seemed better to publishers and author to try and get a more comprehensive view. Even so, I have not succeeded in mentioning everything in his output and have been beaten on the post by his latest choral work for the Worcester Festival of 1954, *This Day* (*Hodie*). The contents of the two 'Pilgrim' booklets have been incorporated, with some modifications, into the larger context of this wider survey.

Musical analysis is notoriously recalcitrant to literary treatment,

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even though Tovey's genius sometimes persuades one otherwise. I have tried to relate it to more general ideas about music and for the sake of clarity of exposition have allowed myself some repetition and restatement of ideas in different contexts, when I have thought their truth relevant. Ideas do not cease to be true if they are repeated (any more than if they are false they become true by reassertion).

The only acknowledgements I personally have to make are to the late Ernest Irving for putting at my disposal his unique information about the *Sinfonia Antartica*, to Dr. Vaughan Williams himself for the answers to a few questions of fact, and again to Miss Anne Gilchrist by way of renewal of my acknowledgements of 1937, for her help in tracking folk-songs.

F. H.

January 1954

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Symphonies

Introduction

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS's idiom, achieved after much casting about in the schools and the wider world of music in the way that has been described in many biographical accounts, is so markedly personal that it has often drawn on to it the reproach of mannerism. It might therefore be supposed that the range of thought to be expressed therein would be limited by it. Beethoven put his individual stamp upon the *lingua franca* of the eighteenth century, but his idiom is less idiosyncratic than that of the no less independent-minded Englishman. Beethoven enormously enlarged the scope of what could be said in music from the humanism of the Eroica to the pantheism of the Ninth. Yet, bold though the claim may be, Vaughan Williams's six symphonies, couched in this circumscribed idiom, cover a wider range of human experience than Beethoven's, although the subjective emotions are nowhere explored so searchingly as in Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. Only Sibelius's seven are comparable among modern symphonies for variety of mood and musical method. Tchaikovsky's six and Dvořák's residual five are monotonously alike by comparison and Brahms hardly competes in range with his four superb and characteristic creations.

Vaughan Williams gave programmatic titles to his first three and numbers with key assignations to the last three. But they are all programme symphonies. In time they stretch from 1912 to 1948: two are pre-war, two inter-war, and two in-war. The 'Sea' (1912) and the 'London' (1914), bold as they seemed in their break with classical procedures, are less radical in idiom than the 'Pastoral' (1922) and No. 4 in F minor (1935), which it is very tempting to call the 'Fascist', if the name did not carry so great a load of reprobation. Nos. 5 (1943) and 6 (1948) are more startlingly unlike than Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, though both have

their identifiable roots in earlier work of the composer. No. 6, which the composer forbids us in defiance of all internal evidence to call the 'War', has affinities with No. 4. No. 5 is related to *The Pilgrim's Progress* but recalls what we have heard before in many another work, so that in some sense it is an epitome of Vaughan Williams's ruminative and apocalyptic styles. It might be called the 'Benediction'.

Vaughan Williams's is the prophetic type of mind in that it pierces to the heart of whatever is the object of its penetrating gaze. The Old Testament prophet was such a person who could see into the nature of good and evil. Such a mind apprehends that consequences, however belated, follow from good and evil acts, that the mills of God grind maybe slowly but exceeding small, and is therefore in a position to foretell with confidence what those consequences will be. Prophecy has thus come in common parlance to mean, as indeed by the derivation of the word it is entitled to—foretelling the future. But the essence of prophecy is the understanding of the present. The most conspicuous examples of prophecy in the complete Old Testament sense of the word in Vaughan Williams's music are the Fourth and Sixth Symphonies. But there is much also of sheer vision, which is the kernel of prophecy, in the Pastoral Symphony, for instance, which sets forth that this is what the life of nature is like, and there is much that is apocalyptic, that is, a revelation of ultimate Being, in *Job* and *Flos Campi*, as well as in the works with words of divine revelation, like 'Let all the world in every corner sing' and *Sancta Civitas*. Visionary, ruminative, and apocalyptic, but not, be it noted, introspective. Unlike the romantics from Beethoven on through the nineteenth century, Vaughan Williams does not turn his gaze inwards and write of heart-searchings. His knowledge of human nature is not conspicuously less than that of the romantic introverts, but his gaze is extraverted. 'Look around you' was the advice he gave to young English composers 'for your inspiration'. For himself looking around was the source not merely of his inspiration (in the sense of a starting-point for composition) but also of his understanding of the world. The extravert is less likely than the introvert to get his proportions wrong and his vision

myopic, provided he has the introvert's sensibility. Vaughan Williams looked out in his symphonies first upon the sea, which conditions the Englishman's life whether he is aware of it or no, then upon London, the great city which gave him the picture of urban man, before he turned to the countryside in the 'Pastoral' to see man as only a part of nature. In No. 4 the prophet sees the nature of naked violence triumphant in Europe, and in No. 6 there is similarly a prophetic warning of what will happen to mankind if it persists in its foolish, wicked wars. Only in No. 5 is there some turning of the eye within, though here the vision is more apocalyptic than romantic—despite the slow movement being entitled Romanza.

The *Sinfonia Antartica* stands outside the symphonic canon because of its origin and because its programme is at once avowed and detailed, but its sheer size is warrant enough for attaching it to the group of symphonies rather than to the other orchestral music in smaller forms.

The Sea Symphony

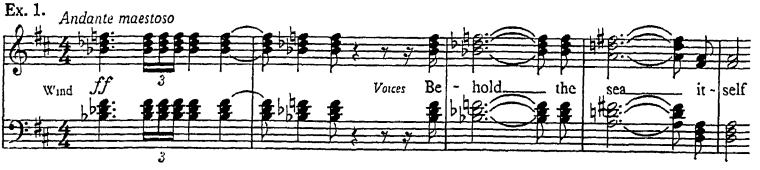
The Sea Symphony is a choral work. Is it then a true symphony or a cantata in disguise? Other choral symphonies, Beethoven's, Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*, and even Mahler's Eighth Symphony, are only partially choral. In Vaughan Williams's choral symphony the orchestra has no independent part to play whatever. Nevertheless the orchestral symphony has prescribed the pattern of the work. The first movement is substantial and, in spite of the superior directing force of words, retains some elements of sonata structure. The slow movement *is* slow and is ternary in form. The third movement is a Scherzo and is so designated. The finale is longer and looser and under its title, 'The Explorers', might almost be an independent cantata. Whitman's poetry, from which the text is drawn, is sufficiently flexible to permit of a compromise between vocal and instrumental forms. Indeed Whitman arrived at his forms from a study of Italian opera, to which he was devoted. The thought of the poet in general was congenial to the composer,

for he had made his bow to the world in *Toward the Unknown Region*, composed in 1905 and first performed at the Leeds Festival of 1907. Radical, homespun, natural, adventurous, of the open air, these are the epithets of Whitman's poetry which found a response in the young composer. He found enough about the sea in Whitman, mostly in *Sea Drift*, to supply him with what he wanted for a four-movement vocal symphony. He was at work on it from 1905 till it was produced at the Leeds Festival of 1910, when he conducted its first performance.

I

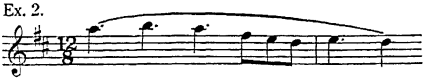
The words of the first three movements are taken from that section of *Leaves of Grass* which is called *Sea Drift*. Delius's cantata of that name is occupied with the first poem of that section. Vaughan Williams for his first movement takes 'A Song for all Seas, all Ships', prefaced by a fanfare on the chord of B flat minor (in the key of D major) and a few lines that come from 'Song of the Exposition' in *Leaves of Grass*:

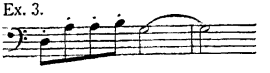
> Behold the sea itself,
> And on its limitless heaving breast the ships
> See where their white sails, bellying in the wind
> Speckle the green and blue
> See the steamers coming and going in and out of port
> See dusky and undulating the long pennants of smoke.

Ex. 1. *Andante maestoso*

This juxtaposition of minor and major triads a third apart is the sea itself, just as it says. The same progression is found at the beginning of the slow movement and of the Scherzo. It is as succinct an image of the sea as could be conceived in tones, just as the monosyllables 'ebb' and 'flow' do it in words. This is one of several ideas which run through the movements linking them thematically and

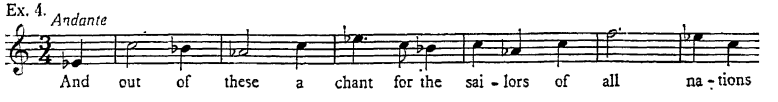
spiritually. Another is the rhythmic juxtaposition of duplet and triplet figures in a melodic phrase.

The exposition of the symphony, then, begins with Ex. 1, which is immediately succeeded by the broad tune given out by the orchestra, the principal theme of the movement:

Ex. 2.

A counter-exposition establishes these ideas. A change of time and key signatures brings us to 'to-day a rude brief recitative' and the equivalent of a symphonic second subject, the character of which is epitomized in the figure

Ex. 3.

A moving quaver bass and the Dorian mode, which can shift easily into Aeolian or Ionian (i.e. major), launches the catalogue of ships, flags, signals, and sailormen, which is caught up by the chorus. A second idea in the second subject is the chant, which again is introduced by the baritone and repeated by the chorus:

Ex. 4. *Andante*

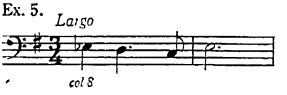


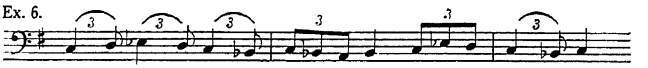
The equivalent of the development section begins with the fanfare (Ex. 1), now in C minor and fitted with different words: 'Flaunt out, O Sea, your separate flags of nations'. The soprano soloist now embarks on an episode in a broad melody in A flat with arpeggio accompaniment. The climax, which rightly in a symphonic movement comes towards the end of the development, is reached when D major, the main key, returns and with it a melody derived from Ex. 2, in which threes are interpolated among twos. The recapitulation section (in D) is marked 'tempo del principio'; the words universalize what have hitherto

been particularized in Whitman's device of evoking images and assonances by a catalogue of nouns, the baritone singing 'A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors, all seas, all ships', dutifully echoed by the chorus. Finally Ex. 2 (in modified rhythm) clinches the movement with a great diatonic tune, in which chorus and both soloists are at one. But the movement, as so often with Vaughan Williams, ends quietly.

II

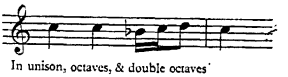
The slow movement is in an asymmetrical ternary form. The text is the poem 'On the beach at night alone'. The short introduction is another version of the juxtaposition of the minor triad and its major antithesis a major third higher (cf. Ex. 1). A chord of C minor pulling against a chord of E major spells a tonality of E minor which, when reached, allows the baritone soloist to begin the declamation of the poem, in which he is echoed by a semi-chorus of contraltos. Under the swaying chords of the introduction there is a short descending figure:

Ex. 5.

which is inverted and used in alternation with the descending form during this opening section. A lullaby tune emerges from the combination to illustrate the old mother swaying and singing her husky song.

Ex. 6.

The whole of this short section is quiet and subjective—it is marked 'misterioso'—the poet thinks 'a thought of the clef of the universes and of the future'. The substance of his thought becomes the second subject of the movement in the frank key of E flat major. The full chorus is drawn into the dialogue with the soloist. The word 'distances' causes not a modulation but a jump to G major; 'Souls' similarly transfer themselves to A minor and major.

All 'identities', which would seem to mean living entities, whether nations or individual lives, produces a new figure of great importance which the composer uses as an emphatic interjection to drive home the poet's assertions:

Ex. 7



In unison, octaves, & double octaves

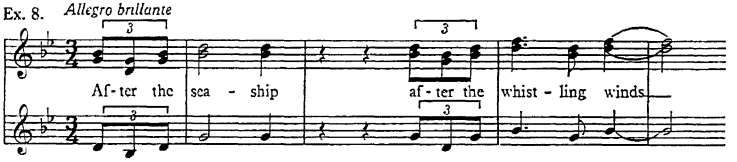
This is the final form of it and it is in C major (or mixolydian) in which key the chorus, in six-part harmony coalescing into a unison, makes its supreme declaration of faith that past, present, and future are held together in one 'vast similitude'.

An orchestral epilogue, with a single exclamation from the soloist, returns to the mood and the themes of the opening. It is not after all quite so unequal in length as it appears on paper or as the longer middle section leads the ear to believe—for the time is slower.

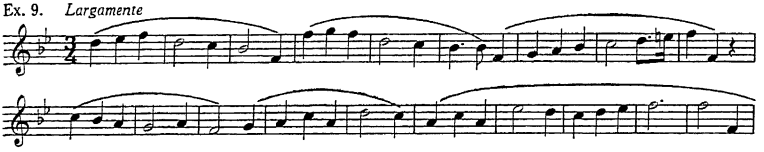
III. *Scherzo*

The Scherzo justifies its name in form and spirit. It consists of the usual four sections, of which the opening one returns after the trio. Its rhythm depicts the play of great waves. It is entitled by the composer 'The Waves' and its text is Whitman's 'After the sea-ship'. Into it are injected, not very obtrusively, two English folk-songs of the sea.

The juxtaposition of minor and major thirds is again the starting-point—this time on voices:

Ex. 8. *Allegro brillante*

There is a good deal of writing in thirds and triads for the voices and windy chromatic scales for the orchestra. The second section of the Scherzo proper is founded on a striding tune in the bass which is not recapitulated. At the end of this second idea 'The Golden Vanity' is quoted high in the orchestra. The trio

begins largamente in G minor with a fine diatonic tune which is good enough to make full quotation imperative:

Ex. 9. *Largamente*

This is not organized like a folk-song and has only its Englishness in common with a folk-song, though it might conceivably have been written by Parry. As if this was not enough, a quotation from 'The Bold *Princess Royal*' is woven into the harmony. The second section of the trio becomes chromatic, trumpets sliding down in 6/4 chords in cross-rhythm. To add to the tumult of waters the violins play in 9/8 time and the basses plod steadily in angular disjunct intervals. There is an optional cut for the chorus during this turbid passage, but voices recover the initiative with the return of the Scherzo (Ex. 8). This is much curtailed to make way for another allusion to the trio (Ex. 9) now in G major, but the last word is with Ex. 8 and the voices are heard shouting two superimposed triads of G to the word 'following'.

IV. '*The Explorers*'

The finale is called 'The Explorers' and the words come not from *Sea Drift* but from *Passage to India*. The sea is at first forgotten and the poet has launched on his quest for the meaning of it all—'Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee'. But the Soul, in scanning the universe, ever and anon returns to the sea as the symbol of its journeyings,

> O we can wait no longer
> We too take ship, O Soul.
> Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas.

and at the end

> Away O Soul, hoist instantly the anchor

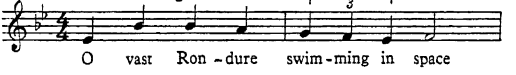
till the voices die away in

> O farther, farther sail.

The mood of exploration, with its high courage and its exhilaration, had already been the composer's inspiration with Whitman as his poet in *Toward the Unknown Region*, with which at the age of thirty-three Vaughan Williams secured recognition as a composer who was going to count for something in English music. The words of *Toward the Unknown Region*, from *Whispers of Heavenly Death*, have become his motto for life, since at the age of eighty he was still pressing forward. His roots are firmly grounded in tradition but his mind, as will appear from a survey of the symphonies alone, is always turned towards the future. Age has but added a deeper and more penetrating vision to the ardour of youth.

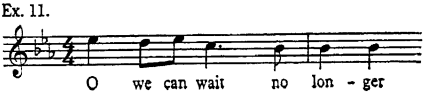
Symphonic form is abandoned in this finale. There is no orchestral prelude. Voices and violins in unison sing

Ex. 10. *Grave e molto adagio*

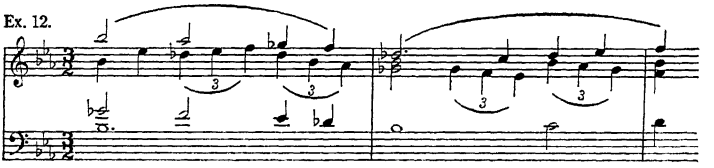


which by its shape and its triplet figure is related to Ex. 2 in the first movement. In this short introductory section the choral writing, though not very contrapuntal, breaks away from the block harmony and simple antiphony of the Scherzo. In the next section ('andante con moto') Adam and Eve descend from the gardens of Asia in a monotonous chant. In the original version tenors and bass had sung the words to a tune in unison while the orchestra sustained a high-pedal point, but in later editions the choir intones the D and the orchestra plays the tune (in the Dorian mode). A female semi-chorus sings unaccompanied the sad incessant refrain 'Wherefore unsatisfied soul' and so the movement continues, the music governed entirely by the words. Baritone and soprano soloists have a duet which constitutes the chief middle section founded on an urgent tune in E flat (the key of the opening):

Ex. 11.



which ultimately broadens out into the leitmotiv of twos-and-threes which informs most of the big sea tunes of the symphony—this sort of thing:

Ex. 12.

There are some optional cuts before the final stage in the journey opens with an unaccompanied passage in block harmony to the words

> Greater than stars or suns
> Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth.

But now the theme of the sea comes up again and the soul is bidden to steer for the deep waters only. Deep waters mean twos-and-threes in the voice parts as well as in the orchestra, which does however have a version of the tune embedded in Ex. 12—the alto part. But the last word grows out of Ex. 11, and while the voices have tight-packed triads of E flat, the orchestra dissolves that chord beyond the range of voices both above and below till no more is to be heard—the ship has vanished over the horizon.

The London Symphony

Vaughan Williams's second symphony has a title—the London—and it quotes two tunes of definitely local associations, the chimes of Big Ben and the lavender seller's street-cry, also from Westminster. Is it therefore programme music? All commentators address themselves to this problem of definition and most of them say no. The composer himself, like Beethoven in a similar fix, tries to extricate himself from the imputation—programme music is supposed to be in some way inferior to abstract music, like a poor relation who belongs to a lower social class. Beethoven quite mendaciously says of his Pastoral Symphony that it is not painting, which it quite blatantly is, so much as an expression of feeling,

which it also quite truly is. 'Hearers may if they like localize the various movements and themes, but it is hoped that this is not a necessary part of the work,' says the composer of the London Symphony with a deprecatory deference unusual for him. He further says 'It has been suggested that this symphony has been misnamed; it should rather be called Symphony by a Londoner.' Which again is untrue. Vaughan Williams did for a number of years live in London, but he was born in a Gloucestershire village, was at school at Charterhouse in rural Surrey, went to Trinity, Cambridge, spent some time in London at the Royal College of Music and some time studying in Berlin, but has spent his later years at Dorking. His crucial musical experience came to him while collecting folk-songs in the villages of East Anglia. No, not a symphony by a Londoner: a half quotation, a reminiscence at least of 'Searching for lambs' occurs in the first movement; Londoners do not normally search for lambs, though there are sometimes sheep in Kensington Gardens.

The fact is that the symphony is programme music but not of the detailed sort like Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique (though even that is not quite so particularized a bit of tone-painting as its composer would have us believe) or like Schumann's Rhenish Symphony. The true programme symphony stems from Beethoven's Pastoral and is exemplified in Mendelssohn's Italian and Scottish Symphonies, which no one would mistake for symphonic poems in the manner of Liszt and Strauss. Programme symphonies may be as unexceptionably regular in construction—in so far as any symphony after the time of Mozart can be said to be formally regular—as the sufficiently abstract symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms, such as Beethoven's second or Brahms's fourth. But they tell of something, outside the weaving of patterns of sound, of the Viennese, of the Italian, of the Scottish countryside, of London, the flower of cities all. They tell it in patterns of sound. If the London Symphony is not a guide-book it nevertheless evokes memories of London; it portrays the spirit of the place (it can be compared with Delius's *Paris* in this respect). The Scherzo, which is also a Nocturne, is an impression of London at night. 'Impression' is a word that reminds us that the new impressionism,

derived from French painting, was being applied to music by Debussy at the time when this symphony was being incubated and composed. The London Symphony, the first instrumental work of any size, if the Tallis Fantasia of 1909 is not counted in the same category, is, then, an evocation of London.

The symphony has been several times revised. It was finished by 1914 and had its first performance on March 27 of that year at one of the concerts given by F. B. Ellis (an amateur who sponsored concerts of the unfamiliar and adventurous and whose library formed after his death the nucleus of the music library of the Faculty at Oxford). Geoffrey Toye was the conductor then. At its next performance in 1918 Adrian Boult, then at the very beginning of his career, was the conductor. It was revised by the composer and published in 1920 with a dedication to the memory of George Butterworth, killed in the war. Even that revision was not final, for there are cuts in the Finale of the 1920 score in later editions. It is scored for triple woodwind, cornets in addition to trumpets, harp, and in the percussion department jingles and glockenspiel as well as the usual triangle, drums, and cymbals.

The form of the symphony is not very unconventional, but we find an Epilogue to balance the Introduction. The Introduction to the first movement is also an Introduction to the symphony as a whole and the Epilogue to the fourth movement is very much the Epilogue to the whole. The first movement is a regular sonata movement; the slow movement is ternary; the Scherzo-Nocturne is a cross between a normal scherzo and a rondo; the Finale is in an immense ternary form with Introduction and Epilogue.

I

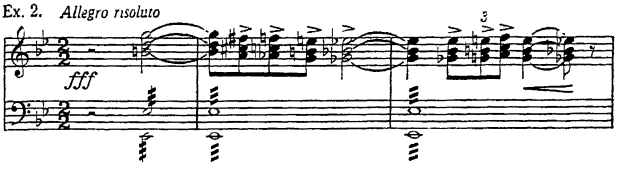
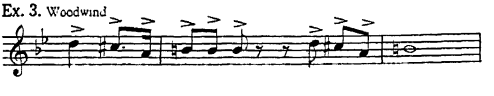
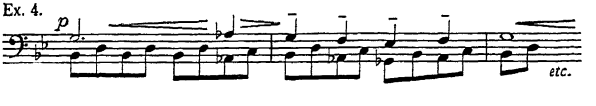
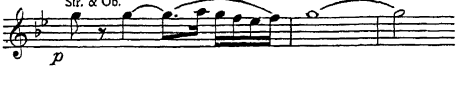
The Introduction begins with a germinal motif of the rising fourth contained in Ex. 1.

Ex. 1.

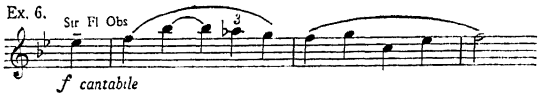
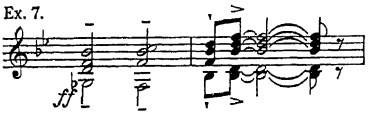
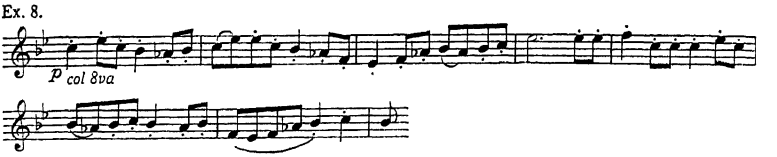
This spreads to other parts from the bass and, as is the way with such motifs, grows into a melodic phrase (which however remains

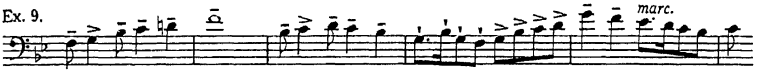
pentatonic, lacking the third and the seventh). A counterpoint in contrary motion with Ex. 1 forms a short section which has suggested the comparison of the city to a great beast asleep—Delius's *Paris*, it may be recalled, opens with the city similarly stirring in its sleep. The beast heaves and pants to the extent of breaking off after a few bars with a comma and a pause. The woodwind begin to take part in this unfolding of the germinal motif and finally play it in oscillating diminution in order to work the tempo up to allegro risoluto for the main movement, which is marked 'molto pesante'.

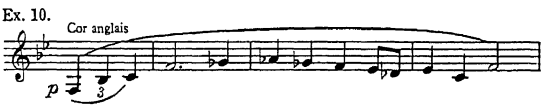
There is considerable wealth of themes in this sonata movement whose main key is G minor. Three may be quoted from the first subject, four from the second.

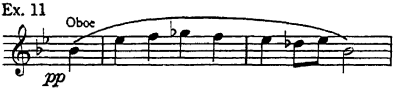
Ex. 2. *Allegro risoluto*

Ex. 3. Woodwind

Ex. 4.

Ex. 5.

Exx. 2, 3, and 4 have no apparent inner connexion, but while a tremolando bass underlies Exx. 2 and 3, the change to oscillating bass in Ex. 4 (which actually occurs a few bars earlier) is the significant feature. Ex. 5 belongs to this group in G minor and serves as a bridge to the second subject. This has for its first tune Ex. 6, in which the break into a triplet is the important feature;

for its second, Ex. 7, which is very emphatic and loud and marked 'poco animato'; for its third a perky street tune accompanied by harp and triangle, Ex. 8.

Ex. 6.

Ex. 7.

Ex. 8.

Between the statement and repetition of this hexatonic tune there is a section marked 'largamente' in which the trombones hurl up a syncopated theme, Ex. 9.

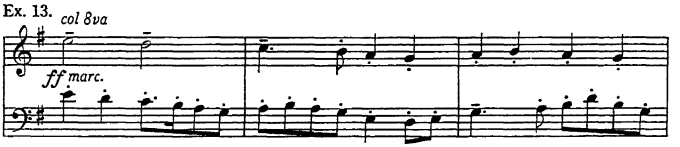
Ex. 9.

These second subject tunes are telescoped together by way of codetta before the development begins with Ex. 1. Then comes an episode consisting of two tunes, both rather pastoral for the

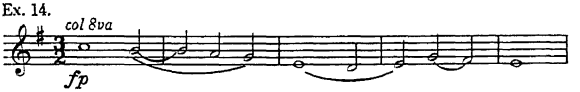
Ex. 10.

London scene, Ex. 10 on cor anglais and something suggestive of 'Searching for lambs' on oboe, Ex. 11.

Ex. 11

The rising fourths of the anacrusis of these tunes relate them to the germinal motif, Ex. 1. There is still another melodic fragment to be taken in—the flute plays it quietly but prominently.

Ex. 12.

The middle of the movement consists of a self-contained episode based on the first theme of the second subject, Ex. 6. It is made distinctive by its scoring for harp and string quartet; its place is made geographically plain by a single strand of string solo which, rising from a low C sharp, both insulates the episode from, and connects it to, the preceding material. The connexion to the recapitulation is made by Ex. 10, handed from one wind instrument to its neighbour and linking hands with Ex. 12. There is some premonitory tremolando rumbling as the time changes to 'tempo alla primo' and the recapitulation begins with Ex. 2 modified and abbreviated. Exx. 3 and 4 also put in brief appearances. Ex. 7 insists that the second subject must be heard, but what appears after this herald's fanfare is the street tune (Ex. 8), its first idea (Ex. 6) having been referred to in the middle episode of the development section. The second subject material is enhanced by augmentation. Thus the tune which appeared simultaneously with Ex. 9 towards the end of the exposition now appears in augmentation with itself thus

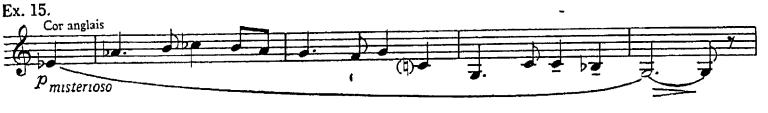
Ex. 13.

and still further augmented and broadened as

Ex. 14.

with an augmentation of a cross between Exx. 10 and 11 in counterpoint with it in the woodwind. The thematic material is

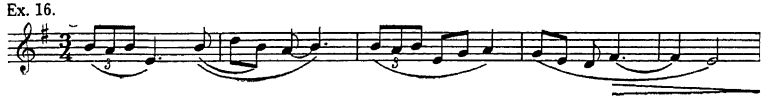
immensely copious and inter-related, and the sweep of the music so integrates it that analysis never seems to account for all of it. The coda is based on the descending figure of Ex. 13 reiterated, while underneath Ex. 1 can be heard asserting itself. Ex. 7 has the last word and the movement ends noisily, which is unusual for Vaughan Williams. So are the size, variety and complexity, the extremes, the wealth and the spread, of London depicted in that capacious portmanteau form which for lack of a better term we call sonata form. The London County Council and London Transport have to deal in administration and practical operation with precisely this congeries of qualities. This sprawling metropolis can be appreciated as a unity in a symphony no less than in practical life.

II

The slow movement (Lento) begins with chords for muted strings very much as the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony begins (cf. p. 49 below) upon which, as in the Fifth Symphony, a cor anglais solo is projected:

Ex. 15.

The solo is marked 'misterioso' but it is the chords that make the mystery, for the first rising progression of triads suggests E major, the second A flat—there is no key signature. At the end of the paragraph is a pause and the music starts again differently scored—for harp and trombones!—with E major. The strings in unison take up the tune (Ex. 15) in A flat minor. This is the first of two ideas that together constitute the A music of this large piece in ternary form. The other is a horn melody built up in stages over an accompaniment of reiterated strings.

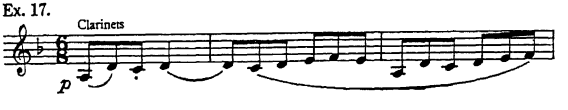
The middle or B section is composite. It begins with the viola tune which exfoliates into other melodic strands characterized by a triplet.

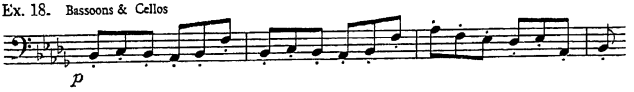
Ex. 16.

Then a shake on the jingles and a chirp on the piccolo introduce the street-cry of the lavender vendor on the clarinet. The cry is not complete, but this is the opening snatch of most of the variants found in Westminster and Kensington. The fact that it is not complete allows a certain amount of development and variation over an increase of animation in the orchestra—harps, jingles, and drums being prominent contributors to the bustle, which is kept up long enough to make a climax. Then quiet is restored and Ex. 15 with its introductory triads returns. The recapitulation is abbreviated—page 95 of the 1920 score has been excised, but there is an allusion to the triplets. The viola tune, Ex. 16, has the last word as a sort of aftethought in an indeterminate key, the last chords suggesting C and the tune itself veering to A minor.

III. *Nocturne*

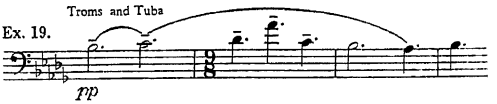
Although most scherzos are quick and most nocturnes are slow, the Scherzo of this symphony is specifically described as a Nocturne—an unusual conjunction of ideas, which does, however, carry out the composer's intention—to depict London at night. Here again in this movement the material is copious; it is disposed in a rondo form, though the first section—call it A—behaves like any minuet-scherzo and is marked to be repeated. B starts off after the double bar like a bit of fugato. If this can be styled the first episode in B flat modal-minor as against the D minor of A, it is short, whether compared with A or with the second episode C, which is a representation of a fair-organ on Hampstead Heath in the vulgar key of C major. After the return of the rondo there is a coda in the same rhythm running the music down to a whisper.

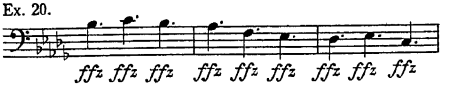
The scherzo-rondo music itself contains two subjects, i.e. groups of ideas. After a setting of a dance rhythm in 6/8 time the clarinets give out a snatch of a quasi-folk-dance tune:

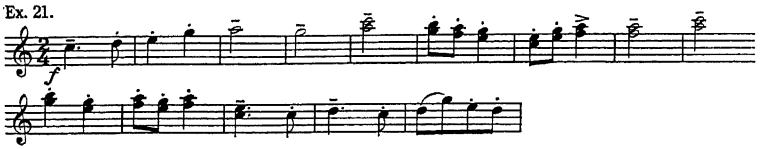
Ex. 17.

Three-bar phrase-lengths are common, alternating with other lengths to give a short-breathed effect. Ex. 17 in the Aeolian mode produces variants and developments. But with a change of key signature from one to five flats a second idea is promulgated, like unto the first in rhythm and phrase-length,

Ex. 18. Bassoons & Cellos

and another quite unlike:

Troms and Tuba

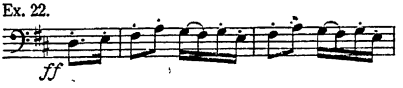
Ex. 19.

The fugato has for subject

Ex. 20.

with a counter-subject of triplets. The rondo Ex. 17 *et seq.* is shortened to two-thirds of its original length. The street tune is

Ex. 21.

This bit of realism begins as an accordion or even possibly a mouth-organ solo, but it is inflated on repetition to the size of a fair-organ. Elgar, it may be recalled, puts a similar episode into his 'Cockaigne' Overture. That two composers should regard street music as an essential ingredient in any picture of Edwardian London may suggest to the social historian that the Cockney finds an expression for his cheerful and endearing vulgarity not only in verbal wit but in a characteristic music. It may also suggest that the coming

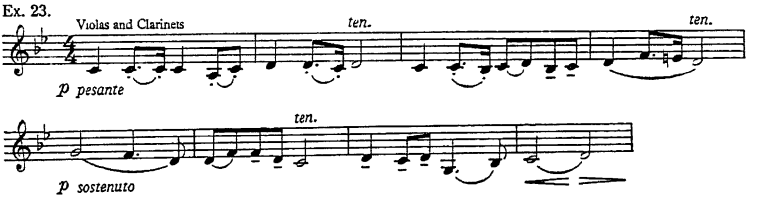
of the radio has largely eliminated the barrel organ and other pavement music from the London streets. Or it may be the police. But in any case the Londoner hears less of this kind of thing today than he did before Europe went to war.

There is one phrase, not so far quoted, which occurs at the end of the rondo on each of its appearances:

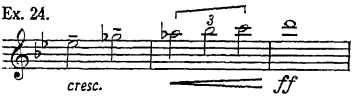
Ex. 22.

which now before the coda is uttered with great emphasis, as if to register sturdy independence, major against modal, duple against triple. In the coda, when it is quiet enough, the harp has a tiny solo suggesting the nocturnal striking of a distant church clock.

IV. *Finale*

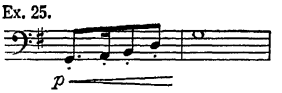
The Finale has an Introduction and an Epilogue—the Epilogue being part of the larger design of the symphony as a whole. Between these two sections the main body of the movement is in ternary form. The main theme is a march tune:

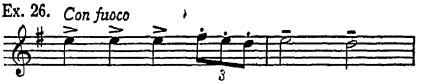
Ex. 23.

This is in G minor for structural purposes, but as it stands it is in the Phrygian mode with its final on D. If the tense strains of the introductory bars bring us back to London's more serious and strenuous business, the march may suggest the more ceremonious side of London life. The tune is repeated with fuller scoring; in a third statement its constituent phrases are punctuated by two-bar interjections from the strings, in which off-the-beat chords still further exaggerate the heavy tread of the rhythm. As the cortège begins to pull up for a change into the middle section there is a

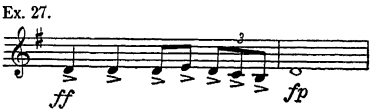
curious anomaly of notation to be observed. What appears in the score is this:

Ex. 24.

All conductors treat this as an interpolated bar of 3/2 time, yet there is the figure 3 to indicate a triplet in a bar of which the value is unchanged. Do all conductors make an elementary mistake of time-keeping or did the composer not write what he meant?

The middle section starts off with the two-bar-cum-off-beat idea, now quickened to allegro; horns and lower strings prod the music with this goad

Ex. 25.

and so urge it to a new and emphatic short tune

Ex. 26. *Con fuoco*

which in turn does much work and even changes its shape to

Ex. 27.

before the return of the march (Ex. 23). This is considerably elaborated and leads surprisingly into the first subject of the first movement—Ex. 2. The reason for the excursion is immediately revealed: while a solo quartet of strings sustains a chord, the Westminster chimes strike as in the Introduction, though now it is the three-quarter hour, not the half-hour as then.

The Epilogue reverts to the four-note motif (Ex. 1) against much tremolando in thirds from strings and flute. The four-note motif develops here as in the beginning into its melodic phrase, but a late cut from V to W has removed its lengthy continuation and the symphony dies away from the top downwards till only

a murmur is left in the bass to dissolve into silence. When last heard it was definitely at rest in G major.

The Epilogue as a structural feature seems to be Vaughan Williams's invention. It differs from a coda in being the summary and conclusion not of one movement's argument but of all four. In Brahms's Third Symphony the motto F A F which had been prominent in the opening bars of the symphony is recalled in the last. But a motto, as used by Tchaikovsky for instance, to strengthen the unity of a symphony by an idea common to all movements is not on its last appearance an epilogue. Vaughan Williams plainly wanted something less mechanical to secure this unity. The epilogue is his solution and his valuable innovation.

The dedication of this symphony to Butterworth's memory enshrines an important fact in its history, which appears in Vaughan Williams's own contribution to the memorial volume published after George Butterworth's death. He wrote:

> One of my most grateful memories of George is connected with my 'London Symphony'; indeed I owe its whole idea to him. I remember very well how the idea originated. He had been sitting with us one evening talking, smoking, and playing . . . and at the end of the evening, just as he was getting up to go, he said, in his characteristically abrupt way, 'You know, you ought to write a symphony.' From that moment the idea of a symphony—a thing which I had always declared I would never attempt—dominated my mind.

And Vaughan Williams goes on to say that he showed him the sketches of it bit by bit as they were finished and received valuable criticism from him. Butterworth also helped to revise the score in readiness for the first performance and to make a short score of it. He contributed an article on it to the *Royal College of Music Magazine* (Easter Term, 1914) from which one quotation may be taken:

> The slow movement is an idyll of grey skies and secluded by-ways —an aspect of London quite as familiar as any other; the feeling of the music is remote and mystical, and its very characteristic beauty is not of a kind which it is possible to describe in words.

Truly the symphony is *about* London.

The Pastoral Symphony

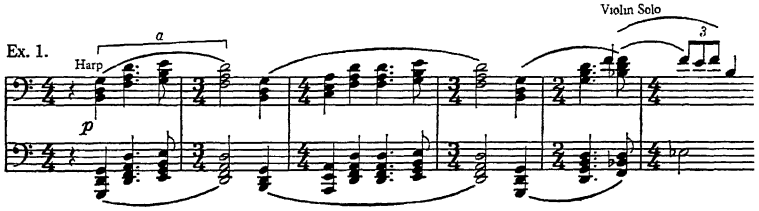
The third of Vaughan Williams's symphonies has, like its predecessors, a title, fully acknowledged. It does for the countryside what the first did for the sea and the second for the city. But it is not very pictorial; it is, as the composer in his own note on it suggested, contemplative, and the mood is singularly sustained: 'There are few fortissimos and few allegros. The only really quick passage is the Coda to the third movement, and that is all pianissimo.' None of the variety of the London Symphony here; instead, a close homogeneity of material throughout, which arises from the germinal motif (*a* in Ex. 1) which is heard, like the similar motif at the start of the London Symphony, at the beginning. There is a further superficial resemblance to the London Symphony in the oscillating quaver motion of the first bars, even before the germinal motif is heard on bass strings and, in triads, on the harp. But there similarities cease.

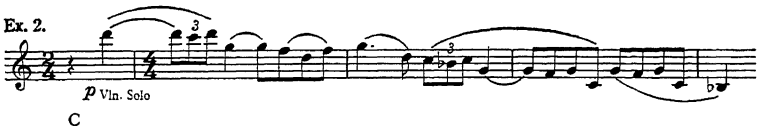
This symphony, first performed at a Philharmonic concert on 26 January 1922, under Adrian Boult, launches out in a new manner which not only shows the imprint of modal melody, derived at one remove from folk-song, but triadic harmony, which from now on became a finger-print of the composer's style, and an essentially contrapuntal texture. It is a difficult symphony to perform because it is a ceaseless flow of melodies which interweave with each other and in the absence of dynamic climax give little indication which ones are prominent enough to constitute landmarks in the unhurrying flux. The best performance I ever heard of it was at a Three Choirs Festival at Hereford when Sir George Dyson conducted it with a cool objectivity that allowed all these lines freedom to unfold in the mellow but not unduly resonant ambience of the cathedral. Any attempt at making it 'effective' is doomed to failure. No symphony is more dependent on clarity of texture in performance, for it is scored for large forces, three each of the wind except bassoons (2) and horns (4), harp, percussion, strings, and a soprano voice (in the last movement). A special

point in the orchestration is the insistence on the use of a natural trumpet in the second movement, of which the purpose is to make the seventh of the scale flat enough and the ninth sharp enough. The purpose of these natural notes is no doubt to get purity of tone and an emphasis on the modal character of the theme. But as a matter of historic fact the melody for trumpet in the second movement, for which these 'out-of-tune' partials are prescribed, is a direct transcript of real life. Lodged in the composer's mind was a recollection of camp life with the R.A.M.C. at Bordon in Hampshire where the bugler hit the seventh as a missed shot for the octave. The symphony was incubated during Vaughan Williams's military service, and in so far as any particular locality is depicted in the symphony it is northern France, where he went after being commissioned in the Royal Garrison Artillery in 1917. The scenery in the Pastoral Symphony is not spectacular and northern France with its willows and streams is much like southern England.

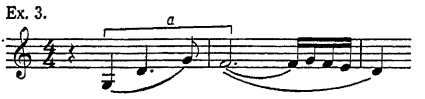
I

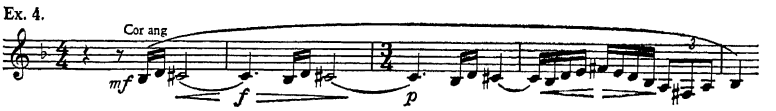
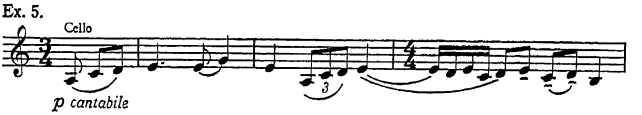
The first movement, marked 'molto moderato', is in a clear sonata form with key relationships that are only unusual in that the tonalities are modal rather than major or minor. The symphony opens in the Dorian mode with D as the final and G as its dominant—the polarity of G and D is very marked and even allows for debate which is the effective tonic, an issue not resolved by the consecutive fifths of Ex. 1 :



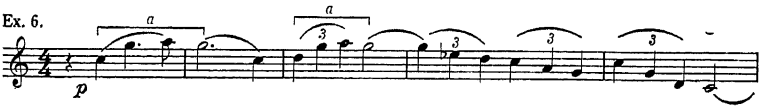
nor by the ambiguity of the first melody,

C

Each of the main themes is in two parts. The balancing phrase of Ex. 1 is a violin solo, of which the first notes are shown in Ex. 1 but in a longer citation in Ex. 2. A cadence of decided character concludes this section and is itself important:

Ex. 3.

Without any other bridge passage the second subject follows. This too is in two sections, one of which is in B minor and the other in A minor:

Ex. 4.

Ex. 5.

Both these are taken up in free imitation by other instruments and there are other tributary figures. A cadence in A major ends this section and the exposition.

The swaying flutes and figure *a* introduce the development section in which the first event is an expansion of Ex. 1 by a solo violin:

Ex. 6.

Counterpoints appear sparsely—there is a lot of white paper and many whole-bar rests in the score—on horn, on flute, on oboe, and on harp (consecutive six-four chords, these) all treated and marked as solo. The triplets do, however, work up sufficient animation to thicken the texture and to bring up the dynamics to a mezzo-forte; and the cadence figure (Ex. 3) is employed to clinch something that can be called the climax of the movement.

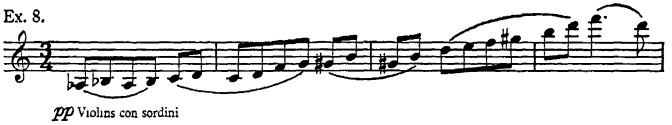
There is no complete recapitulation since Ex. 1 had already made another appearance at the beginning of the middle, development section, but Ex. 3 is heard again on the horn and leads direct to the second subject. Ex. 4 is heard again still on the cor anglais and Ex. 5 on the cello, though reinforced now at the octave by the oboe. The coda, which is of fair proportions in the context of this unpadded movement, is really a development of Ex. 1 and its attendant material. The last notes are *a* in the bass. The absence of mortar between the main stones of which this movement is built suggests the dry-walling of the Cotswolds.

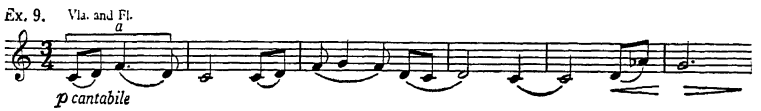
II

The composer's own laconic note says of the slow movement, marked 'lento moderato', 'This movement commences with the following theme on the horn:

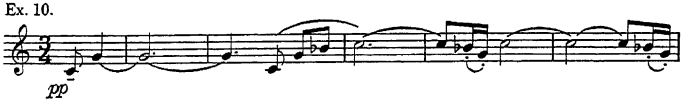
Ex. 7.

followed by this passage on the strings'

Ex. 8.

These two are adumbrations of the main subject and its extension, which are now given out 'poco tranquillo, tempo rubato', on a solo viola and solo flute in unison:

Ex. 9.

Ex. 9 has a running accompaniment on the violins which leads on to the second subject, the fanfare with the flat seventh. In the notation of the score, where on its first appearance it is directed

to be played on an E flat trumpet and on its next appearance on an F horn, this solo, over pianissimo strings, appears as

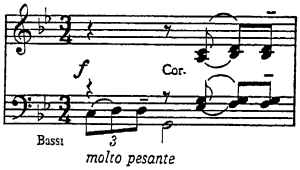
Ex. 10.

which is continued 'senza misura' to take in the ninth and tenth partials. Ex. 9 returns on viola and horn with derivations of Ex. 8 in attendance. Finally the two subjects (Exx. 9 and 10) are combined—Ex. 9 on clarinet, Ex. 10 on F horn.

III

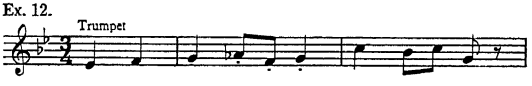
The third movement is not called a scherzo—it is marked 'moderato pesante'—but the composer describes it as 'of the nature of a dance movement'. It has the equivalent of a trio section, which is however repeated after the reprise of the first part, and there is an extensive coda founded on new material. This coda contains the only fast music of the symphony.

The basic rhythm of the dance is shown in the opening bars

Ex. 11.



which also establish G minor as the main tonality of the movement. When this has been established, the time quickens and the shape of the rhythm is somewhat modified. The trumpet announces a short tune

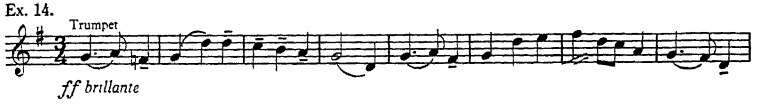
Ex. 12.

which quickly develops into a considerable climax with full brass and all. Another idea completely contrasted, consisting of a wayward arabesque of melody on the flute over tremolando strings

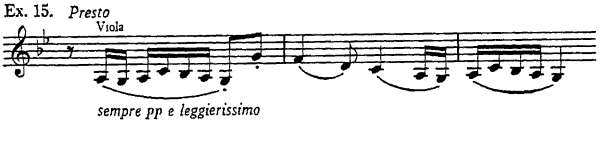
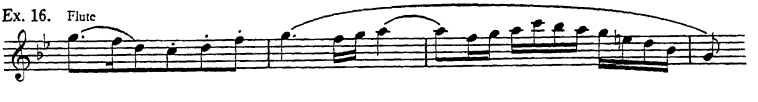
and harp, makes the third constituent, anchored to the main rhythm of Ex. 11.

Ex. 13. Flute

This arabesque passes from flute to violin and is treated canonically almost to the double bar, where a change of signature to one sharp takes us to the tonic major.

The main tune of the Trio is, again, for the trumpet—not a natural trumpet now but an ordinary trumpet in C.

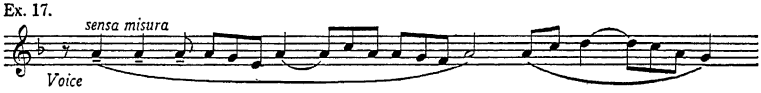
Ex. 14.

'Piu mosso' and 'poco animato' with a gradual thickening of the orchestration make this short Trio something of a hill in the gentle landscape. The dance figure (Ex. 11) and the flute tune (Ex. 13) return, followed by the trumpet tune (Ex. 12), and are recapitulated, but in a reduced space. The Trio also recurs fully scored, and then comes the coda which is marked both 'presto' and 'pianissimo'. This coda is founded on two short themes, the one essentially a string figure and the other a wind melody.

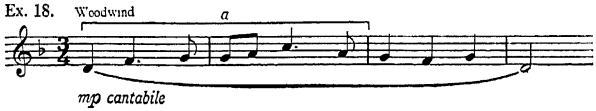
Ex. 15. *Presto*

Ex. 16. Flute

These are quoted as they first appear but they are fluid and appear with different tails subsequently. Ex. 16 for instance loses its flowing arabesques when the oboe takes it up and transforms semiquavers into steady crotchets. Ex. 15 moves up and down in the strings in a kind of free fugato. Soon the texture fines out, the

pace drops and what was pianissimo with two *p*'s becomes a pianissimo with three. Harp and celesta dissipate the sound into silence.

IV. *Finale*

The Finale calls for a soprano voice, though a clarinet is allowed to deputize for her wordless cantilena. There is no accompaniment save a drum-roll on A. The score says a tenor may sing this free rhapsody but in practice it never is so sung. The effect is to be that of a human figure as part of the landscape—the voice comes out of the distance to the person who is contemplating the view. A strain of this unbarred melody may be quoted.

Ex. 17.

It forms an introduction, provides the material for development in the middle and acts as an epilogue at the end. The main subject of the movement is a more formal melody harmonized in blocks and consecutive fifths.

Ex. 18.

In the middle section this firm outline gives way to a haze of tremolando strings over which strands of rhapsody derived from Ex. 17 pass from oboe to solo violin. Ex. 18 alternates with it from horn to clarinet. The tempo, which has been moderato maestoso for the main body of the movement, reverts to lento for the vocal conclusion which is accompanied, not by a low note on the drum, but by a high note on the violins.

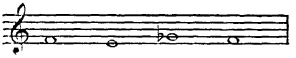
The bones of the movements of this symphony as shown by the above dissection are skeletal enough and there is no complication of form, but the counterpoints that clothe the bones are rarely twice alike. They do not evolve as they go, like organic melodies, such as 'The Seeds of Love', which is a good example

from English folk-song of a tune in which there is no repetition to determine its formal pattern. The persistence of *a* is a barrier to that sort of process. But the tunes themselves change intervals and time values as they pass from one instrument to another while retaining their basic shape and character. The result is fluidity without dissolution. As the play of light over a landscape changes its aspect without altering its features, so in this symphony the thematic substance is variegated by this melodic fluidity.

Symphony in F minor

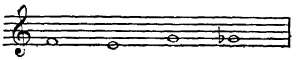
The fourth symphony to come from its composer's pen—it was sketched during the winter of 1931–2 but not performed or published till 1935—has no programmatic basis, though it has a most pronounced emotional quality of its own. There is no specific subject like the sea, or London, or the country, which it can be said to be about. Its subject is contained within it and is of a logical nature. It is a disputation on two themes which run right through all four movements—if they can be called themes:

Ex. A



which, as the composer is himself at pains to point out, is not the B A C H theme, which in this key would be

Ex. B



and

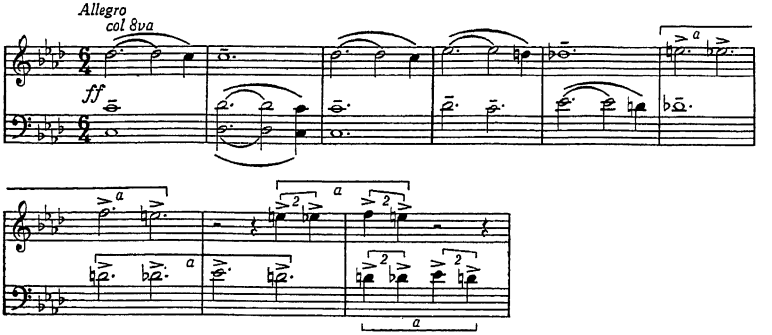
Ex. C

These are not so much themes, since until the fugal epilogue they never become 'subjects', as the germs of themes. They are structural elements—steel girders as it were in this modern edifice of glass and concrete. They are found at the heart (or the tail) of

the actual subjects employed, but until A emerges openly in the final Fugue they remain the concealed power behind the formal rulers of this extremely powerful symphony.

This power is startling. It is also something quite new in Vaughan Williams, who himself remarked of this score: 'I don't know whether I like it, but this is what I meant.' Vaughan Williams is quite capable of blunt utterance in music as in writing or in counsel, and he has said blunt things in music before which can be set against the more ruminative observations and speculations which his admirers particularly cherish—of which there is only one example in this symphony, the very brief episode 'lento non troppo' in the Finale at 13. But he has never before taken the bull by the horns with quite the violence of the opening bars:

Ex. 1. Full Orchestra



nor maintained so sustainedly a conflict of such intensity as lasts right through the symphony, which is heavily scored with little intermission from beginning to end. Always with Vaughan Williams there is something new in every work he writes, generally something disconcerting to his admirers who have just caught up to the work before last. The older he gets in years the more youthful becomes his stride. But Age has a surer confidence than Youth can have, and Vaughan Williams has found with advancing years the impetus that gathers power from its own functioning and fertility increased from its own flowering, though the growth is not so much in prodigality, large as his output is, as in saturation, like Beethoven's and Verdi's in their later work. This new note of sheer power—violence almost—is characteristic

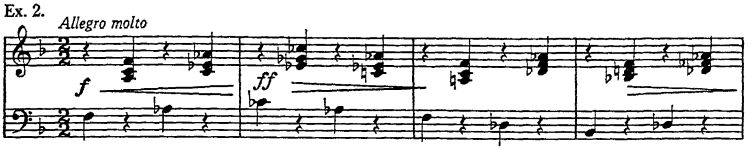
of an age of electricity, speed, and of Fascism. If this symphony has a message it is minatory in that it is a revelation of the essential nature of violence.

But its province is rather logic than ethics, in which respect it is nearer to Brahms than to Beethoven. As in Brahms, it follows the tendency to put the weightiest matter in the Finale. Some may say that Mozart began it in the 'Jupiter'; certainly Beethoven tilted the balance from first to last movement in the Choral Symphony; but Brahms less consciously but more consistently changed the centre of gravity of the symphony. In three, at any rate, of his four symphonies the finales deal with matters of greater substance than the first movements where traditionally they belong, and in doing so generate a greater degree of feeling. Consider in this respect the F major Symphony of Brahms, which professes to investigate the logical implications of a theme—F A F, of an interval—the major-minor third, of a key relationship—A flat to F (though one must in honesty admit that the psychological implications of the F A F motto 'frei aber froh' may colour the mood of the symphony). The opening movement, though strong, is lyrical enough, but the key colours get darker as the symphony proceeds—F major, C major, C minor, and finally the thundery F minor—and it ends in a storm of passion, which cannot be described as *froh*, whatever else it may be. The procedure is not quite the same in Vaughan Williams's F minor Symphony: the storm comes first in a key professing to be F minor, and certainly feeling like it though not looking much like it on paper, and the purely logical issues are relegated to a fugal epilogue. But the two symphonies have this passionate logic as well as the tonal centre of F in common, and a common drive towards the Finale. Brahms reserved the Finale of his C minor Symphony for his largest spread and the Finale of his E minor for his deepest penetration; Sibelius follows no consistent plan of symphonic organization, but one may observe as early as the Second Symphony that he attaches the Finale to the preceding movement, thereby acquiring increased momentum for his Finale, and chooses for his dominating theme, as also in the equivalent movements of the Third and Fourth Symphonies, a broad tune that concentrates

what has gone before into a kind of epitome of the whole. Perhaps, however, this is not concentrating more into the Finale than was done by the romantic composers, Franck, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, and Elgar, when they triumphantly bring their ships into port on a flood tide after their adventures in preceding movements. Vaughan Williams goes much farther than this and employs in this symphony, as in the London Symphony, an Epilogue, openly labelled as such; as a formal device comparable in importance and function to the symphony as a whole with Beethoven's use of the coda to summarize his single movements. In the Sixth and Antarctic Symphonies the last movements are called Epilogues. Formally they are not therefore the same thing as the coda-epilogues of the London and F minor Symphonies, though the intention to draw the argument together into a summary is no doubt the same in them all.

This is not to say that it has become a universal practice to substitute for the irresponsibility of classical finales something of greater weight, either psychological or musical, than is found in first movements—Walton, for instance, had a job to find a proper conclusion to his symphony and put the chief matter of debate into his big opening movement. Nor must an epilogue in itself necessarily give ballast to a finale, though it will tend to do so—the Epilogue to the London Symphony is short and quiet like night descending on the city—nor will two composers use it alike or the same composer twice for the same purpose. Still, the fact remains that the Finale of a modern symphony is often more important than the equivalent of a classical or romantic symphony, and that Vaughan Williams in particular works towards an epilogue in which to reach both a logical conclusion and an emotional peroration. In the F minor Symphony, as in the Piano Concerto, he has linked the Finale to the preceding movement. This is a confusing practice to the listener in his first hearings of the work, for the simple geographical reason that he cannot tell where he is. He hears something new and says 'Ah, an episode', but waits in vain for a recapitulation of familiar material. In this symphony the join between the third and fourth movements is obscured for him by the fact that the first emphatic theme of the

last is a relative of something that has appeared in the second, but the difficulty is only momentary, since a landmark appears after four bars in the shape of an 'oompah' bass, Dr. Vaughan Williams's own description of its name 'in professional circles'.

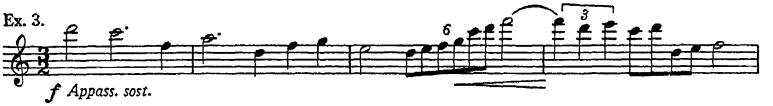
Ex. 2.

Such a bass implies that the movement cannot wait, it must push on to its fugal epilogue without the full formal deployment of first and second subjects and their leisurely development. As in the 'Jupiter', the final movement as a whole is a combination of symphonic and fugal writing, but, unlike the 'Jupiter', which may hasten but never hurries, this quick movement deals first with thematic versions of A and B in a purely symphonic if somewhat abbreviated manner, and then proceeds to combine them fugally. Until the themes have had fugal treatment the last word of logical argument has not been said. So A is taken as the subject of the Fugue and B is used in the counter-subject. It is noteworthy that A is as near to a horizontal straight line as a sequence of tones can be and that B is vertical. No wonder a structure thus braced in both directions is strong.

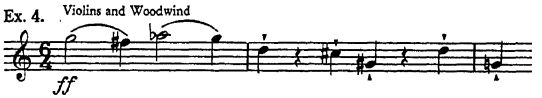
The symphony, which is dedicated to Arnold Bax, was completed in 1934 and first performed on 10 April 1935 by the B.B.C. orchestra under Adrian Boult. It plays thirty-two minutes and is scored for a full orchestra (3 each of wind), the usual brass, percussion without frills (4 instruments, 2 players), and no harps.

I. *Allegro*

The first movement plunges *in medias res* with Ex. 1. (The composer has said that he deliberately cribbed this opening from the Finale of Beethoven's Choral Symphony.) A is heard at the sixth bar and again in diminution in bars 8 and 9. B follows almost immediately (bars 14–16) on the brass and is similarly repeated in dimunition on strings and woodwind. This material is now repeated a fifth higher—one hardly likes to say in the dominant,

since no key centre has yet decisively established itself. The tonal outlook, however, changes at *meno mosso*, where time and key signature both change, the time to 3/2 and the key from a nominal F to a nominal C [1] like an orthodox second subject. To an accompaniment of repeated chords on wind so grouped in fours as to fall on different beats of the bar, a long cantilena is given out on the upper strings, who are instructed to draw long bows, beginning:

Ex. 3.

The dynamics are still hell for leather, the sudden forte-piano and occasional pianissimo marks being but devices for imparting an extra kick to the crescendo which immediately follows. This cantilena leads into D major and to a theme, enunciated by horns and strings over a marching bass, which is but an elongation of A and is repeated against a counterpoint of minims striding down the strings. These brusque repetitions constitute a more forceful kind of development than the method employed by the previous generation of stating a subject and then beginning to pull open its petals without waiting for the development section proper. We have, however, something like a middle or development section at no. 11, 'Tempo Primo', where a passage founded on the opening subject Ex. 1 transforms itself during a quiet but exciting tremolando passage into

Ex. 4.

whose broken phrases are picked up by the clarion call of B leading into a recapitulation. It is, however, not a complete restatement of the first subjects, and the cantilena (Ex. 3) appears very soon in the bass. In the cantilena there has appeared a triplet figure.

[1] I suppose the opening chord of the symphony should be regarded as dominant harmony in F, but its discord is never resolved; it merely leads on to another, and when the moment of decision arrives the fundamental bass moving upward overshoots its tonic and lands on F sharp!

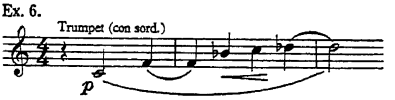
The heavy artillery (double-bassoon, double-bass, third trombone, and tuba) now seize upon this, quietly at first,

Ex. 5.

and with it detonate the final explosion. Thereafter the movement subsides into its first real calm. The coda is a slow and soft paraphrase of Exx. 1 and 3 in D flat, in which key the movement ends.

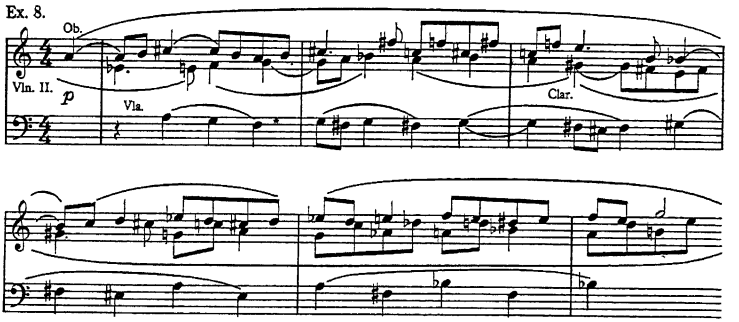
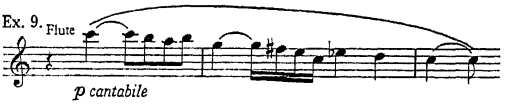
II. *Andante Moderato*

The text of the slow movement is B, enunciated by trumpets and accompanied by trombones, and again immediately repeated by woodwind:

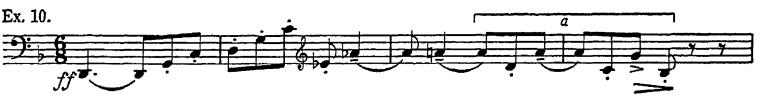
Ex. 6.

But the matter is not at once pursued. Instead, one of Vaughan Williams's characteristic marching basses starts up—quite definitely in F minor, this—and over it a theme is played by the first violins which is not so F-minorly.

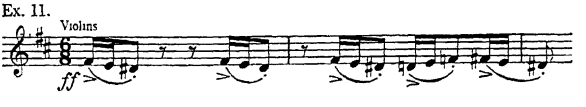
Ex. 7.

The oboe next traces a similar theme in A major against a counterpoint of strings and clarinet generally in three parts which sound dissonant but are not really in different keys. Here is a specimen:

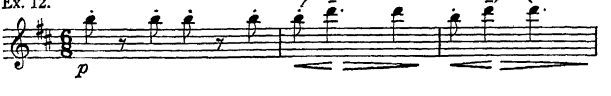
Ex. 8.

A second episode of similar character follows, still over the marching bass. The texture is now expanded to full orchestra without the heavy brass, which is reserved for projecting B (Ex. 6) once more to the fore through the swaying chromatic figure taken from Ex. 8 which holds the field at this point. The drum puts an end to all this and the flute is heard tranquilly playing what Dr. Vaughan Williams describes in his own programme-note as a cadence figure to end the first half of the music:

All the material of this movement is closely related, through its relationship to A and B; the quavers of Ex. 9, for instance, relate it to the oboe tune. Similarly all over the orchestra one solo instrument after another takes up the same kind of arabesque, until the counterpoint begins to glow, over a bass that pursues its steady course. Dr. Vaughan Williams's note speaks of this as another episode. The drums wind up the debate between these strands of a melody which has curled itself into frequent triplets, and bring back the first theme, Ex. 7, over the same old pronounced bass for a shortened recapitulation. The cadence figure provides the coda. It unrolls itself over an attenuating accompaniment and itself begins to dissolve into detached phrases as the rhythm relaxes into a brief unmeasured cadenza. One element, however, holds fast in this dissolving picture: A is played quietly by the trombones in solemn triads.

III. *Scherzo* (*Allegro molto*)

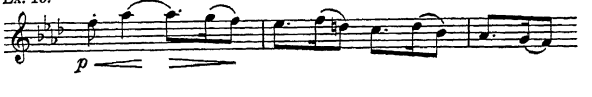
This Scherzo seems in performance to be fleeter of foot than is usual with Vaughan Williams and to have more than a little of Holst in it. Its energy is at once apparent in the chief theme announced at the outset by the bassoons (reinforced with bass clarinets, and strings according to pitch):

Upward leaping arpeggios are Strauss's natural way of expressing virile drive and physical exuberance—the hero's theme in *Heldenleben*, for instance, and (with a difference) Don Juan's main motif. But there is none of Strauss's succulence here—the key is a rather acrid D minor and the curt interjection of A on trumpets and trombones, echoed as usual in diminution by woodwind, banishes all idea of anything like Teutonic expansiveness. In fact it is this blunt statement and even blunter absence of connecting links or development between the various statements, which are hurled one after the other without pause for elaboration, that reminds one of Holst's clear-cut and downright methods. Already, then, at the end of six bars, we have heard both B and A, for the main theme is but an expanded version of B. The angularities of (*a*) in the above Ex. 10 propel the movement until a double bar, where the signature changes to two sharps and a new, even more terse and electrical, rhythm is let loose by the strings:

Ex. 11.

over which solo instruments—the light-weight flute, the heavy-weight trombone, the more complacent clarinet and horns—quietly but insistently outline a new theme:

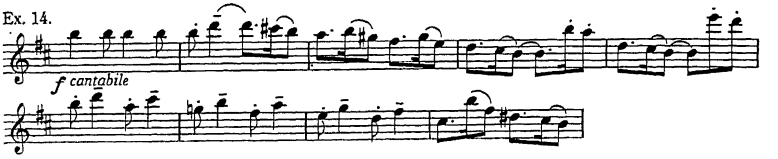
Ex. 12.



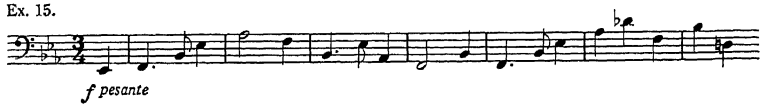
which is continued in

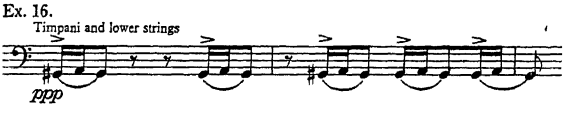
Ex. 13.

And so we hurtle along, heedless of warnings by A's reappearance on the brass (and its faithful attendant echo on the woodwind) that the first subject has to be repeated before the second can be fully stated, which of course is not the strict order of repetitions for scherzos. However, both sections are repeated, Exx. 12 and 13

now being welded into one complete tune given out by all the treble instruments of the orchestra, piccolo included:

Ex. 14.

which, when you come to look at it, is a finely organized, though not obviously symmetrical, rhythmic and melodic pattern.

The trio of the Scherzo is a fugato on

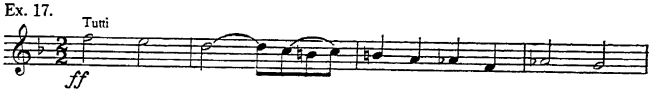
Ex. 15.

Again note the wide range of the subject, which is announced *pesante* by the heavy wind but is soon careering aloft among the ledger lines where the piccolo and higher positions of the violin have their abode. This trio is marked 'quasi meno mosso', but it does not seem to last very long, and the repetition of the Scherzo is soon upon us, which works up to an explosion, followed, as explosions usually are, by a cloud of smoke which here takes the forms of trills on squealing flutes and oboes, hissing violins, and the sizzling triangle. There is a sudden silence broken only by the emergence of a pedal point. This pedal, however, is not a fixed point but a kind of revolving cam,

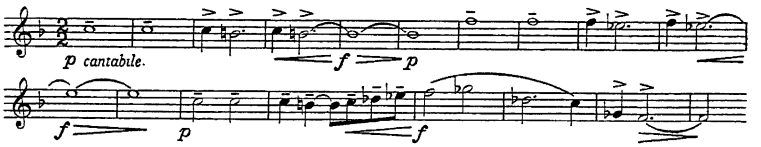
Ex. 16.
Timpani and lower strings

an inverted modification of the old accompanying figure (Ex. 11) above, as it happens. The projecting A emphasizes the pull of the G ♯ and so imparts a greater momentum to the music as it heads towards the Finale without a break. A similar device is employed by Sibelius in the Finale of his Second Symphony, though his cam revolves much more slowly (a final crotchet protruding once in a bar of 3/2 time). Over this pedal solo instruments play, very

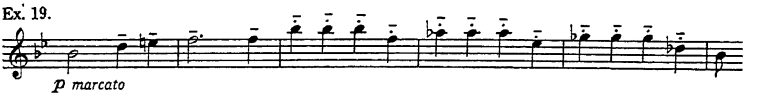
quietly, versions of B. The last eight bars are a crescendo leading with a rush into

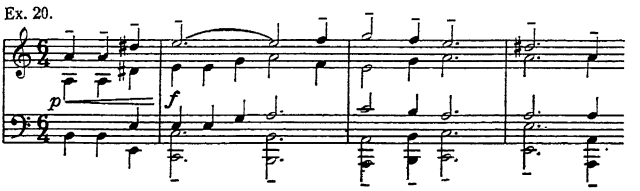
IV. *Finale con Epilogo Fugato (Allegro molto)*

The first theme is a reincarnation of the cadence figure from the second movement (Ex. 9), according to Dr. Vaughan Williams's own analysis

Ex. 17.

which is completed by the 'oompah' bass (Ex. 2) and this sustained melody for wind

Ex. 18.

Ex. 17 is emphatically repeated and extended by trumpet and trombone before the second subject proper is reached. This is a swaggering, aggressive tune, such as some simple-hearted pirate might hiss between his teeth:

Ex. 19.

which is picked up in imitation all over the orchestra and finally transforms itself into a more respectable paean on the brass, marked, however, 'scherzando':

Ex. 20.

The middle section of the movement is itself in three sections, of which the first develops this and 'oompah', the second has an

episode for strings which is the only characteristically ruminative passage in the symphony except the coda of the first movement, with which it has affinities, and the third is a passage over a pedal sustained by drum and cellos and basses. This last is also a quiet paragraph, but it grows into a fortissimo as it enters the recapitulation, which is condensed but is representative of all the material enunciated.

Dr. Vaughan Williams's own description of the epilogue is as follows:

> The subject of the fugal epilogue is A played first on the trombones and then heard both in its original form and inverted, combined with the other subjects of the finale. The work ends with a reference to the opening bars of the first movement.

Nothing need be added to this statement of the facts beyond observing that these cross-references are no mere mechanical contrivances for unity; nor are they quite on all fours with the cyclic themes of Franck and Tchaikovsky: they are rather an explicit assertion of the inner connexion which subsists between all the thematic material of the symphony. This is not a symphony of four independent movements that happen to go well together but an organic growth from certain germinal elements, which are not to be called themes or subjects but are in fact something more rudimentary and fundamental. A and B are not stated as texts of a sermon, though the argument expands and ranges outwards from them. They are the roots from which the themes themselves grow, and the symphony thus has an organic unity, a cohesion rare in any symphony. The flood of its discharge seems to suggest that it remained growing and thrusting in its creator's mind until he could contain it no longer and that whatever then poured out could not be other than relevant and indeed related to the one all-absorbing matter in hand. One may imagine it as the antithetical method to Schubert's, whose fertility allowed one thing to follow another relevantly but discursively. Here the musical mind dammed up its own inspiration until the compression was such that the parts were welded into one all-embracing argument such that even the episodes are not episodical.

Symphony in D

When Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony was produced for the first time at a Promenade Concert during the war, which it almost seemed that he had foretold in his Fourth Symphony, the audience fell under its spell. Its serene, almost religious character seemed to be alien to the mixed programme and casual audience of a Prom, yet there was no doubt that its greatness and its peculiar spiritual quality were at once recognized. Comment at a more superficial level was that the composer had gone back to his earlier style and that the violence of the previous symphony had been exorcized. Opinion came to rest upon the view that it was the summary of a life's work; that if nothing else of his survived, future generations would get a very good idea of Vaughan Williams's style and message from this symphony alone. He was seventy-five at the time and this seemed to be the crown of his life-work. But since then he has produced two more symphonies and the opera on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, from which this Fifth Symphony took its rise.

The Pilgrim's Progress has been an abiding interest and it is not difficult to see why Bunyan's mixture of direct English, the latent poetry in the allegory, and the symbolism of the names in the book appeal to Vaughan Williams, who often uses a corresponding musical idiom compounded of plain speech and its implicit poetry. The Tallis Fantasia, with which this symphony has obvious thematic and textural affinities, springs from a theme which the composer had associated with Bunyan in incidental music to a play about him. Then too there is the Pastoral Episode of 1922, *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*, where fragments of diatonic tune and triadic harmony, though common to much of Vaughan Williams's music, belong to the same stock of ideas. The opera, or as he prefers to call it the morality of 1951, was the culmination of this life-long preoccupation.

But if these elements from *The Pilgrim's Progress* are the deep roots from which the Fifth Symphony grew, they are small elements indeed compared to the greatness of the full revelation in

the symphony. In the Tallis Fantasia there is the meditation and in the *Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* there is the vision; in the symphony we have an answer to life's puzzle and the remedy for its ills; here is the mystical knowledge (i.e. the direct apprehension of ultimate reality without the mediation of sense perception and ratiocination) that comes by the penetration of the prophetic mind. Bunyan has come in for heavy criticism (e.g. from Robert Bridges), and his allegory is an oversimplification by the limited faith of Calvinism, yet it is wisdom from the mouth of a babe. Blake, to whom Vaughan Williams turned in *Job*, wrote Prophetic Books and made apocalyptic drawings. *Ἀποκάλυψις*, Apocalypse (revelation again) has been another of Vaughan Williams's constant preoccupations which came to specific issue in *Sancta Civitas*. The Fifth Symphony is apocalyptic in the true sense of the word, though not in the slightly narrower sense in which it is used for blinding revelation such as is found in the language of St. John the Divine or in the drawings of William Blake. It all comes down to the word 'prophetic'. The prophet is one who reveals the truth (apocalypse). If he foretells the future it is only because he is more fully aware than his fellows of the true character of the world and nature, man and deity. The prophet is not a fortune teller attempting to descry the future course of events, he is a man whose knowledge of past and present is sufficiently penetrating to be equally at home with the future because past, present and future are all one. Vaughan Williams's music has such prophetic powers. The F minor Symphony written at the height of Fascist domination of European thought, when the reign of naked force was established, was prophetic of the violence that was to come, because it understood the nature of an irresponsible and violent society. The Sixth Symphony describes the nature of war as such, as it was in 1940 to 1944, and as it will leave the world if mankind fails to exorcize it. The Fifth Symphony written amid the noise of wars describes the nature of peace. Its peace is that which no pen can describe but which in default of better definition is called the peace that passeth understanding. It is the most successful attempt since Beethoven to use music as a direct penetration of the mystery of life. It is perhaps a

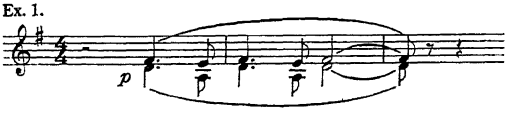
more successful attempt than Beethoven's to deal with metaphysical issues in the language of sound.

To encompass these great issues the composer demands comparatively small forces: there are only two horns (which may however be doubled), two trumpets, no harp or other percussion than timpani, no tuba, and instead of a second oboe there is a cor anglais.

I. *Preludio*

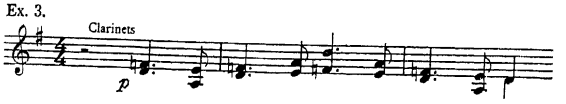
The first movement is called Preludio and is cast in an elaborate ternary form with coda. At least that seems to be the best way of regarding it, but it could be described as an exposition of two big groups of themes succeeded without development by a condensed recapitulation. The key is not established but arrived at by the gravitational pull of the parts against each other. Thus a pedal point C is very pervasive until the change to E major, when something like a second subject takes the field. Against this C the horn-call (Ex. 1), motto of the movement, suggests D and the resultant of this tug-of-war is a sort of A minor as declared by the bass (see Ex. 7) with the undertow of C persisting, so much so that the signature is changed and the one sharp (of a symphony in D!) is cancelled. Then follows a section in C minor and a middle section of various flat keys. The conclusion of the movement bears a signature of two flats but ends with the D major horn-call pulling against the pedal C. No wonder the composer was doubtful of the key!

The horn-call

Ex. 1.

due perhaps to the dedication to Sibelius, with whose Fifth Symphony this opening may be compared, establishes not only the feeling of D major against the pedal C but the basic rhythm of the movement, which is only absent during the middle section. Another germinal motif follows at once upon this horn-call (still over pedal C):

Ex. 2.

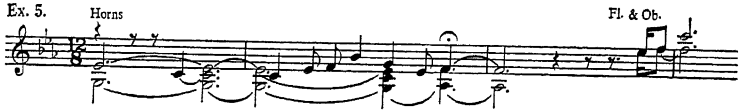
These two germs at once begin to grow after the manner of Sibelius: thus the horn-call:

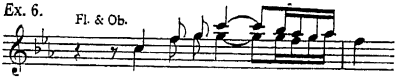
Ex. 3.

and thus the string tune:

Ex. 4.

which picks up the motto rhythm and which leads to a long cantilena for the violins.

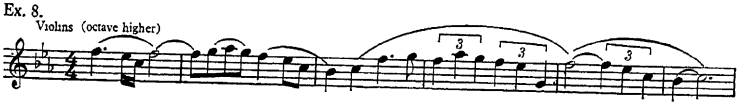
Compare this with the opening of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony:

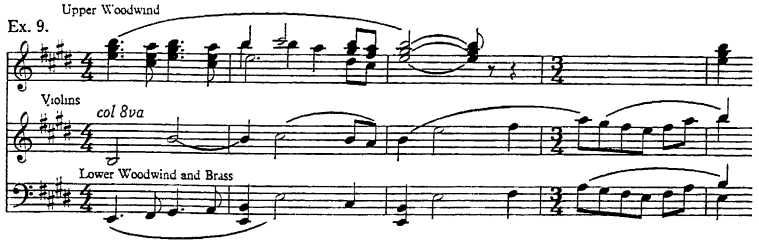
Ex. 5.

which sprouts into

Ex. 6.

with still more proliferating tendrils of consecutive semiquaver thirds. So it is with Vaughan Williams in this Preludio, in which a related bass (i.e. related to Ex. 4) supplies a more constant element:

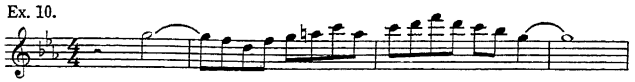
Ex. 7.

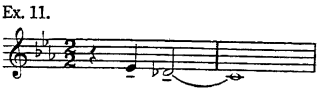
The cantilena tune (Ex. 4) develops and becomes more intense, as the key drops to C minor and the horns reiterate their rhythmic figure (Ex. 1) beneath it,

Ex. 8.

Then comes a wonderful change to E major and E minor and something like a second subject, in which however the horn rhythm remains influential:

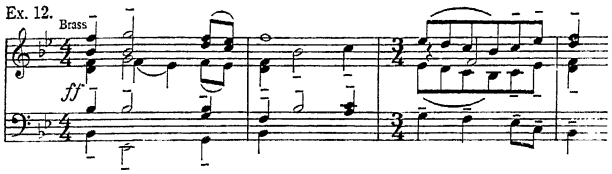
Ex. 9.

Thus the violin tune breaks out of the horn rhythm on a wider curve, though the bass and middle parts continue to reaffirm it, and at one point in its course there is heard for the first time a hint of the 'Alleluia' theme which is to dominate the last movement.

The middle section is marked allegro and consists of continuous quaver movement in the strings based on this sort of tune, which has obvious affinities with Exx. 4, 7, and 9.

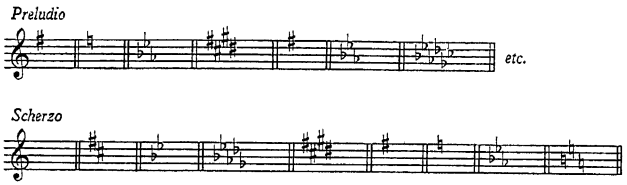
Ex. 10.

Over this something more sinister than anything so far heard suggests opposition to what has hitherto been from the thematic point of view a fairly homogeneous movement, a motif characterized by a baleful flattened second,

Ex. 11.

which is taken up by one wind instrument after another with increasing insistence. The keys rush past, the runs adopt tremolando motion, the volume of tone mounts to a fortissimo. After the crisis the central climax of the movement is reached, a recapitulation of the first part follows, in which the ambiguous D major of the horn-call is reasserted against all this protestation of a mixolydian kind of D minor. When all the material implied in Exx. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 has been quite briefly restated, the brass chorus

pronounces a new summary marked 'tutta forza' of all that the strings have been saying:

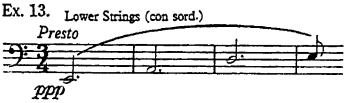
Ex. 12.

This is the final climax and after an allusion to the chief theme of the middle section (Ex. 11), the D major horn-call (Ex. 1) has the last word without however succeeding in pulling the tonality on to an unimpeachable D major, for there is a prominent F natural in the bass and the pedal C persists.

II. *Scherzo*

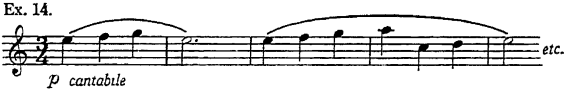
In the Scherzo the principle of organic thematic growth can again be seen at work, and the sequence of key signatures runs roughly parallel with that in the first movement as can be seen at a glance:

But the conflict of good and evil, no more than hinted in the Preludio, is joined in the running fight of this quick movement. If one did not know the origin of much of this symphony in *The Pilgrim's Progress* one would still be driven to the use of such descriptive language, for the music tells its own tale. Bunyan's 'hobgoblin and foul fiend' are plainly on the prowl in Ex. 15. The strings are muted until the change to two-four time near the end. In this section, part trio part coda, duple and triple time jostle each other in different parts and the effect is something like that of stretto in a fugue. This is about as much as can be said of the form of the movement in which Scherzo is an apt description of its character but not of its structure.

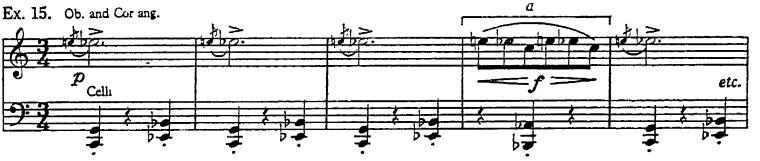
The transformation of themes by growth is put into operation right from the start, where the lower strings enunciate the germ:

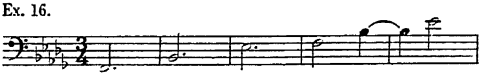
Ex. 13. Lower Strings (con sord.)

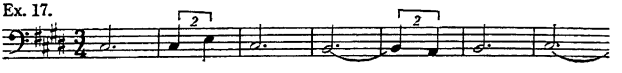


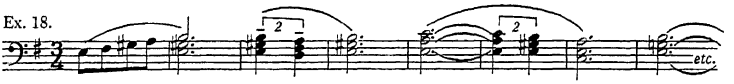
Its first growth is, when the violins take it up, as they do at once, to incorporate a G as a high point; and then as it grows, or rather spreads like a chord, it takes in a C until a tuneful phrase is evolved:

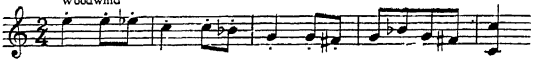
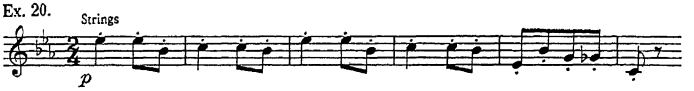
Ex. 14.

of which the constituents show irregular lengths of two, three, and four bars. This is succeeded by a new idea even before the point is reached at which, if this was a movement in normal minuet form, the second section (the B music as it would be called in dance notation) begins and where a change is made to C minor

Ex. 15. Ob. and Cor ang.

which recalls passages in *Job* and the Fourth Symphony, though the resemblance is one of tenour and meaning rather than an exact correspondence of contour and rhythm. At any rate the hobgoblin has now declared himself and his rhythm persists, reinforced by the drum, and fig. *a* of Ex. 15 becomes pervasive in the strings. The trombones take up the challenge with

Ex. 16.

which is clearly a development of Ex. 13. Horns and woodwind in another key come up in support with

Ex. 17.

and the cellos with the powerful aid of trombones in harmony carry the day, first of all in bright major harmony proclaiming the triumph of Good Deeds and then more soberly in modal harmony:

Ex. 18.

After a final statement of this theme (Ex. 18) by brass alone there is a brief sketchy and ghostly recapitulation of the material that belongs to Ex. 14. Now comes the coda-trio in two-four time in which two versions of a descending form of Ex. 18 are bandied about:

Ex. 19. Woodwind

Ex. 20. Strings

The coda proper returns to three-time and dies away in a wisp of Ex. 13.

III. *Romanza*

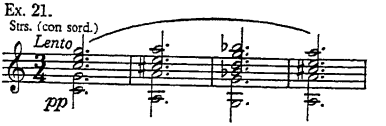
This third movement, the heart of the symphony, is ill named; its inspiration is in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the manuscript score bears a motto that has not been reproduced in the printed full-score: 'Upon that place there stood a cross and a little below a sepulchre. . . . Then he said "He hath given me rest by his sorrow and life by his death".' There is therefore and indeed nothing romantic in any of the normal connotations of that pliable word about this movement; it is a meditation not easily analysable into any of the accepted forms, unless it be what the Germans call *Bogen*, or bow form—and that is perhaps the sense in which the term is applicable. It contains premonitions of the 'Alleluia' motif, probably derived in the last resort from the great Easter chorale 'Lasst uns erfreuen', which dominates the finale.

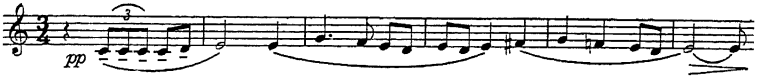
The movement opens on a chord of C major followed by a chord of A major. These two chords are also the first and last

chords of the movement. The second theme of the first subject is in the Aeolian mode, and this neutrally toned tonality is the predominant tonality of the movement, a tierce de Picardie sufficing to bring about the conclusion in A. The form of the movement consists of an elaborate exposition in which four chief strains may be isolated, an 'animato' middle section of no great length and a recapitulation of the first section with its material rearranged in reverse order.

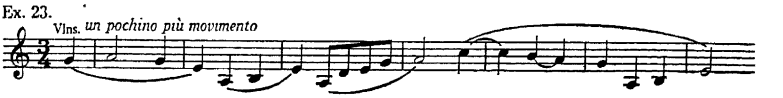
The five chief constituents of the exposition are:

(*a*) a progression of triads

Ex. 21.

(*b*) a tune on the cor anglais put over progression (*a*)

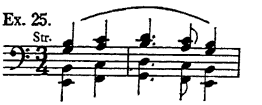
Ex. 22.

These two elements occur in Scene 2 of Act I of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

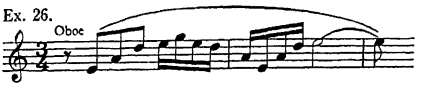
(*c*) a contrapuntal web in eight parts (including octave doublings) upon a long melody that begins

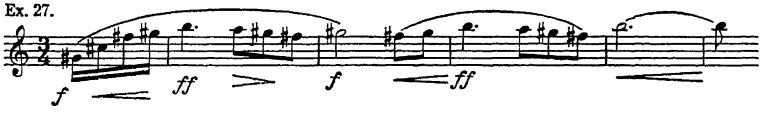
Ex. 23.

and continues in its second strain

Ex. 24.

(*d*) another chordal progression doubtfully related to (*a*)

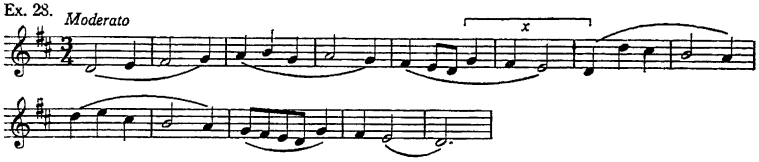
Ex. 25.

and (*e*) by way of codetta an ornamented version of Ex. 24 taken up by woodwind in imitation.

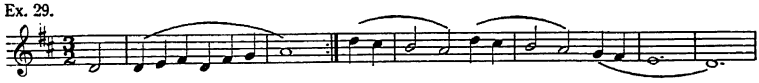
Ex. 26.

The string theme (Exx. 23 and 24) is marked to move a little more quickly than the opening, *un pochino più movimento*. When the exposition is completed it is immediately repeated in a counter-statement beginning at a different pitch. The codetta is now longer and more elaborated with triplets. The adjacent 'animato' section to which it leads is the apex of the bow, if bows can be said to have apexes. Its agitation has a more specifically dramatic purpose than the merely formal acceleration of the middle section of an aria: in the scene of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, of which this is a symphonic transcript, Pilgrim's cries for salvation at the foot of the Cross are set in a musical context derived from this passage in the symphony—or vice versa according to the historical order in which the composer first conceived and subsequently worked out the basic ideas. Oboe and cor anglais have an anguished cry, which is thematically a development of Ex. 24,

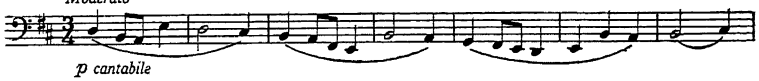
Ex. 27.

(*a*) and (*b*), Exx. 21 and 22, are heard amid the agitation which reaches a climax in the repetition of the 'Save me' passage for brass alone. Ex. 26 (or something like it) is also heard in a clamorous version all over the orchestra. But the mood passes; calm is regained; Ex. 24 on the cellos proves that the terror is past; the whole of the string passage 'pochino più movimento' is recapitulated. On this return journey through the thematic material the oboe tune (Ex. 26) is transferred to a solo violin; the strings murmur the gist of Exx. 22 and 21; the viola has a falling phrase suggestive of 'Alleluia', as the movement sinks to its quiet close.

IV. *Passacaglia*

The Passacaglia is not strictly worked. The theme is varied in figuration, there are episodes, and there is a counter-theme (whose relation to the theme in the bass is like that of the two constituents, treble and bass, of the Prometheus theme in the Finale of the Eroica Symphony). Of this counter-theme

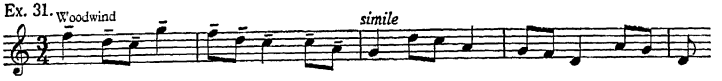
Ex. 28. *Moderato*

one phrase must be intended as an allusion—it is hardly a quotation—to the Alleluia of 'Lasst uns erfreuen', of which the portions relevant to the thematic material of this movement may be quoted for comparison:

Ex. 29.

The theme, as is customary in a passacaglia, is announced in the bass by the cellos:

Ex. 30. *Moderato*

It is a seven-bar phrase and it is ten times repeated, with a few curtailments and extensions on some of its appearances, before its primacy is seriously challenged.

The opening is contrapuntal; every line is firmly diatonic and seemingly related to every other. The feeling and the method are much like those of the last number of *Flos Campi*, and the resemblance to the techniques employed in that work is further emphasized by the lines breaking soon into quaver movement and subsequently into streams of chords. After the tenth repetition of the theme with its superincumbent variations the time changes from moderato to allegro and the passacaglia theme Ex. 30 temporarily disappears from the scene, which is dominated

by the counter-tune Ex. 28 boldly stated by trombones and tuba but quickly taken up by the full orchestra in imitation at various distances. This episode makes way for a scherzando variation of the theme Ex. 30 in C major

Ex. 31. Woodwind

which in turn is succeeded by a resumption in D major of the tune Ex. 28 with the bass Ex. 30 beneath it, a rather stiff variation. These three variations thus make a small self-contained tripartite episode between the first ten statements of the theme and a new series of statements of it in a different rhythm. This new section goes to D minor and changes its time signature from three to four crotchets in a bar; Ex. 30 now appears on clarinet, imitated at four bars' distance by flute and soon to be taken up in new forms containing triplets all over the orchestra.

This section has some resemblance to a development in its elaborate contrapuntal working up to a climax which leads unexpectedly into a reference back to the Prelude with its horn-call (Ex. 1), its extended horn-call rhythm (Ex. 3) and its tune (Ex. 2). Thus the thematic relationship which haunts the mind subconsciously throughout the symphony is made explicit. Exx. 28 and 30 have the last word but they have changed their positions: the upward thrust of the counter-theme Ex. 28 is from below and the arching tune Ex. 30 spans the heights in the flutes till a complex web of strings in ten parts quietly has the last word, which is 'Alleluia' in one or other of the guises it has taken to itself from the two tunes, passacaglia (Ex. 30) and counter-theme (Ex. 28). As in almost all of Vaughan Williams's works the end is pianissimo. The effect is like a benediction.

Symphony in E minor

It is impossible to hear this symphony without referring it to a programme. No need to search (what Ernest Walker used to call 'brain cudgelling'); the implicit programme declares itself to

anyone who lived through the period during which the composer was writing it. In a century's time, when the world may be a better place, the listener may need a programme-note such as this to give him the key to its interpretation. But to anyone who is not deaf or doctrinaire this symphony spells a word of three letters—WAR.

It is of course a species of treason for the writer of analytical notes to interpret in terms of a programme any music that calls itself symphony and not symphonic poem—or sinfonia. It can freely be conceded that more nonsense can be talked in such interpretations than in any other kind of writing about music. Music, we are told, does not need the elucidation of literary concepts since it is self-sufficient and self-intelligible. No matter; composers do not live in ivory towers, nor are they spiders spinning silk threads out of their own guts. They live in the world and their minds are nourished by events in the world, and their emotions are stirred as other men's are. The trumpets and drums, which by long association and by the natural symbolism of their fierce sounds suggest war, are in the second movement as crude a hint of what the symphony is about as are the Westminster chimes in the London Symphony. More than that however, the emotions of the whole are clearly recognizable as that of the Second German War, and the several movements reflect its various aspects, as at the risk of being thought literal-minded I shall propound.

I received a sharp reproof from the composer when I allowed to appear in *The Times* a review of the gramophone records of his 'War Symphony'. He conceded that any writer was at liberty to make such an attribution or to interpret the music in relation to events, but he refused to lend countenance to the idea that he himself had given, or would give, the smallest warrant for such a name or for that interpretation. Nevertheless his general aesthetic allows such an interpretation of a symphony to which he has not attached a name or label. He stated his views about the interrelationship of music and life in the famous article which he wrote for *The R.C.M. Magazine* in 1912: his advice to the composer was to 'make his art an expression of the whole life of the community'.

His own approach in music to situations of real life is visionary rather than philosophical on the one hand or merely descriptive on the other. The London Symphony contains its few touches of realism and is impressionistic in so far as it is based on a visual interpretation of a great city. The Pastoral Symphony uses less realism and is more visionary than visual—it is the essence of the country, not its appearance or even its feelings, that is presented. The choice of the metaphysical poets, Whitman, and other apocalyptic words in vocal works shows the same method of going to the heart of the matter by direct vision. Ultimately the method is mystical, that of direct intuition and immediate perception. What is perceived is the nature of things. All Vaughan Williams's symphonies have been such penetrations by insight—of the sea, the city, the country, of European anarchy, of peace, and now of war.

Not a word of all this however in the programme-note which the composer himself wrote for the first performance at the Royal Philharmonic Society's concert on 21 April 1948. He goes out of his way to be detached, even flippant; he parodies the jargon of us poor scribes who write analytical programme-notes for concert-goers, and spreads his hands in a kind of helpless resignation at the curious goings-on of his themes which land the unfortunate composer into all sorts of predicaments. I must not infringe the composer's copyright by printing it as it stands but I shall both crib and quote from it.

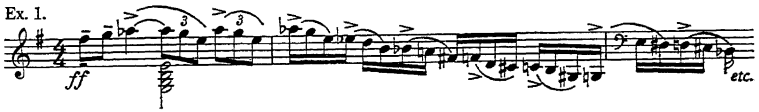
The symphony is dedicated to his friend Michael Mullinar and is scored for a very large orchestra. Triple woodwind, three trumpets with a desirable fourth in some passages, a tenor saxophone, three trombones and tuba, the usual four horns, harp (doubled if possible) and percussion to keep three players besides the timpanist employed are prescribed.

I

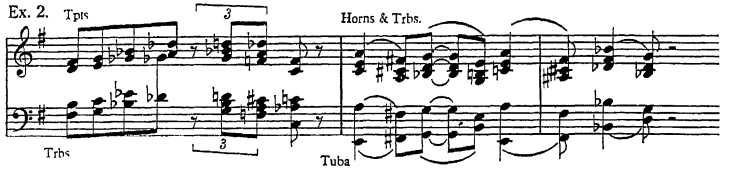
The first movement, Allegro, is in essence a sonata movement in which two ideas are juxtaposed. The contrast between them is stronger than that between most first and second subjects, their relationship is irreconcilable and the development section is not

therefore spent in working them together or showing their ultimate kinship in preparation for the resolution of the contrast, which in a Beethovenian movement is effected in recapitulation and sealed in a coda. This development section does not occur in the middle of the movement but between the first and second subjects in the exposition. Its function is to show an idea actually in process of creating its opposite. Schweitzer in describing a Bach concerto declared that in it 'we really see before us what the philosophy of all ages conceives as the fundamental mystery of things—that self-unfolding of the idea in which it creates its own opposite in order to overcome it, creates another, which again it overcomes and so on until it finally returns to itself, having meanwhile traversed the whole of existence'. 'Opposite' and 'overcome' seem too strong terms to apply to the ritornello of a concerto which first sprouts a derivative of itself and then reabsorbs it, but the comparison is applicable to musical movements in which one theme does generate its successor and antithesis. The idea of creating and overcoming opposites is no doubt one way, and a profound way, of reading the riddle of the universe, and it has also been applied in the narrower sphere of political history to war and peace. This philosophy of history argues that in times of peace conditions arise which lead inevitably to war and that war makes peace necessary and so on in an inevitable sequence. However one may regard this cycle, it is certainly clear that the evil state of war creates its own virtues, which may be regarded as 'opposites' that overcome the parent evil. That is the situation presented by Vaughan Williams in the first movement of his E minor Symphony.

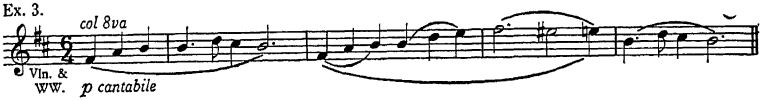
It begins in a flurry of confused keys—'The key of E minor is at once established', says the composer, 'through that of F minor' —with tearing semiquavers plunging up and down the scale:

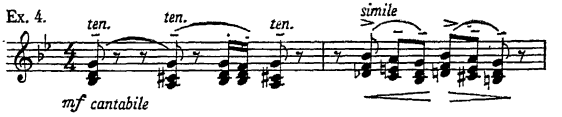
Ex. 1.

This is the turbulence of something being let loose, a trouble unspecified and unpredictable but not difficult to guess in general

terms. The threat is made more insistent by a chordal passage for brass (with flute and clarinet):



There is positive evil added in a section employing what the composer himself has called (in connexion with his F minor Symphony) an 'oompah' bass with the off-beats reinforced with the dry rattle of the side-drums. (This 'oompah' is in 12/8 and therefore hop-skips instead of waddling as in the F minor symphony.)

The opposing principle, when it comes, is a tune in B minor:

of which the D in the last bar of the quotation is inflected alternately sharp and natural. This, it might be thought, would give it an ambiguity ill-suited to the standard-bearer of confidence, which is its function as second subject of the movement. In fact, however, the alternating statement with its accompanying harmony is a form of asseveration. The phrase is one of Vaughan Williams's 'finger-prints' and with its alternation of major and minor sets the mind running back towards the Tallis Fantasia. The tune is separated from its repetition on the brass by a section in which 12/8 and 4/4 time contend for supremacy. If the movement was built on the architectural lines of sonata form its geographical position would be somewhat confused, but the movement is more dramatic than formal and its logic is of the emotions. The emotional significance of Ex. 3 is made clear beyond all debate in the recapitulation where it appears in E major accompanied by harps and trombones, a rare combination of instrumental tone-colour that mixes strength and radiance. This is the assurance of victory, but it is the only piece of encouraging music in the symphony, just as the 'spirit of the finest hour',

to which in some way it corresponds, was the only redeeming feature of the whole ghastly, ruinous abomination of the 'unnecessary war'. But between the first subject (Exx. 1 and 2) and this second subject (Ex. 3) several things happen. The first is 'oompah' ('poco animato' in 12/8 time) over which a disjointed tune appears in the trumpets doubled by woodwind—4/4 against 12/8 is part of the dislocation.

This tune is varied and extended till it transforms itself into

with all the gaps filled and the jolts smoothed out. The feature of this section is the juxtaposition of 12/8 and 4/4 time. Then the second subject proper, Ex. 3, follows and between its two statements, as already related, a development of Ex. 5 occurs. I have described this music founded on Ex. 5 and the mixed rhythms as the true development section, for not only is the thematic material transformed in the way indicated but its unrest is psychologically the antecedent and generator of the motive of confidence, which may be compared to Mr. Churchill's speeches. In his own note the composer shows himself unusually punctilious about conventional observances. With a dig at the 'professional Annotator' and his '*reprise* in due course' he remarks that though the *reprise* is shortened to the dimensions of a hint it is there right enough 'just to show that this is a symphony, not a symphonic poem'. Further, 'to make an end and just to show that after all the movement is in E minor, there is an enlargement of the opening bar'—i.e. Ex. 1 in augmentation.

II

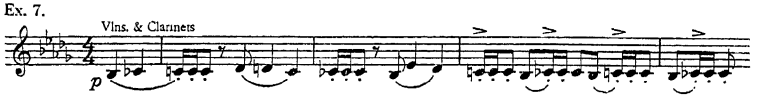
In the second movement, which is not the slow movement of the symphony, the military character of the symphony emerges

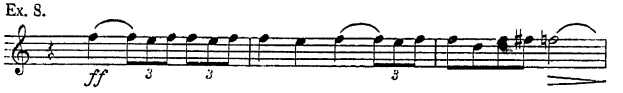
unambiguously in the damnable iteration of a figure for trumpets and drums, which appears as early as the second bar:

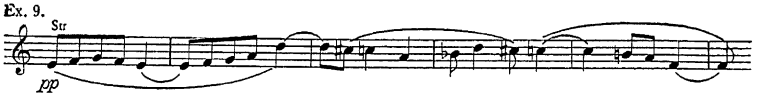
Ex. 6.

The true slow movement of the symphony is the wintry Epilogue, although, like the second movement, it is marked 'moderato'. The metronome figures are 72 and 56 respectively for the crotchet in a bar of common time.

The first theme is noteworthy for its rhythmic insistence and chromatic insidiousness:

Ex. 7.

The varied inflexion of the C, like the similar alternation of sharp and flat in the first movement, makes for emphasis, but here also increases with its ambiguity the sinister effect of the chromaticism. This theme, with some variation in detail and with the addition of a counterpoint in even quavers, is repeated some half a dozen times, often enough for it to begin to nag. Then it is abruptly interrupted by a flourish on the brass:

Ex. 8.

and does not occur again in the movement, which is in four well-marked sections. The flourish and its answering phrase, a unison passage for strings,

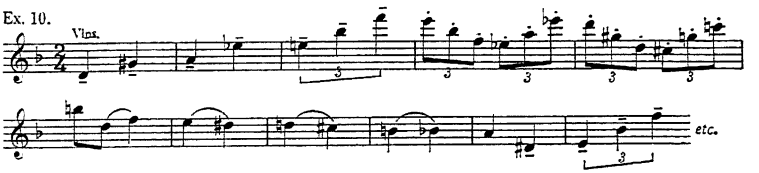
Ex. 9.

constitute the second section. It is repeated first by the woodwind in chorus, then by strings in diminishing intensity, each time followed by the unison passage (Ex. 9). Section III consists of 94 repetitions of Ex. 6 on trumpets, timpani and side-drum. Under this harsh insistence, which pursues an independent and unremitting rhythm of its own, the wail of material derived from what had once been a flourish and its groping pendant (Ex. 9) is

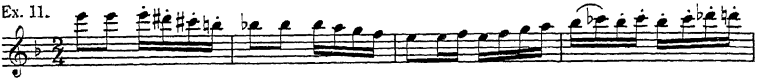
heard together with an outline on horns and trombones of Ex. 7 surrounded by swirling scale passages. When it is possible to bear the trumpet figure no longer—the will-it-never-end? feeling of the war appears both in this movement and the next—the tumult dies, and only a cor anglais is left with a chromatic theme derived from Ex. 9; echoes of the flourish (Ex. 7) and of the trumpet figure (Ex. 6), now no longer brazen with trumpets but muffled on percussion and lower strings, with this theme constitute the coda. The cor anglais connects this movement to the scherzo. Incidentally all four movements are joined: 'each of the first three has its tail attached to the head of its neighbour', as the composer's own note puts it.

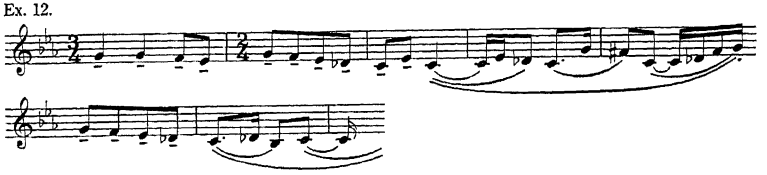
III. *Scherzo*

The third movement is formally and nominally a scherzo but it is no joke. Here indeed battle is joined, the scoring is heavy throughout with little remission and the saxophone makes its odious voice heard in a couple of tunes—the saxophone in serious music usually wears a leer. The emotions involved seem to be derived from the jackboots worn by trombones and tuba, from the scum of triviality as exemplified in Ex. 11, which the composer himself describes as a 'trivial little tune', from the aforesaid leer of the saxophone in a tune which corresponds to a trio in a more normally constituted scherzo, from the resumptions of hostilities every time the music pauses for breath after which the subject starts up again in inversion, and above all from the awful feeling that the whole machine has got out of control and can be stopped by nothing. In the end it stops from inanition in a coda provided by the clarinets (treble and bass) playing an inversion of the main theme and leading into the Epilogue.

This main theme consists of a string of fourths separated by semitones—note that this is not the initial statement of it but the fullest:

Ex. 10.

and so on for a considerable extension. The fourths sometimes slip into fifths, as may be observed, but then, the theme itself suffers from a number of 'bad shots' by various instruments. The trivial theme, assigned first to the high woodwind, is

Ex. 11.

which is also extended to some twelve bars before it pauses for breath and then goes on in disjointed fragments of itself. The descending motion makes a useful counter-thrust to Ex. 10 and the xylophone is called upon to emphasize it. One would be hard put to it to define the key—the augmented fourths in the main theme (Ex. 10) are sufficient cause for that disability—but the tonal centres are marked by signatures, by the first notes of the theme at its different pitches and sometimes more conventionally as when the saxophone plays its tune in a modal C minor. Key organization however is rarely an important feature with Vaughan Williams whose use of tonality is very fluid—was he not in some doubt whether his Fifth Symphony was in D or in G? The ground plan of this Scherzo is determined not by key but by theme. It consists of Exx. 10 and 11 which are strenuously developed together until the arrival of the saxophone solo

Ex. 12.

which provides the second subject—it is repeated fortissimo by the full orchestra and is followed by another saxophone tune like itself accompanied by side-drum. This too is repeated by full orchestra. The third section opens quietly with an inversion of the first theme (Ex. 10) first tried by the bassoon against shimmering strings. The composer's own account of the events in this part of the movement is as follows:—

When the episode [i.e. the saxophone affair] is over the woodwind experiment as to how the fugue subject will sound upside down but the

brass are angry [there is a good deal of anger in this symphony] and insist on playing it the right way up, so for a bit the two go on together and to the delight of everyone, including the composer, the two versions fit, so there is nothing to do now but to continue, getting more excited till the episode comes back very loud and twice as slow (i.e. what the professional annotator calls augmentation).

This then is part four heavily scored and driving one to the point of exasperation. Part five is brief: the subject is inverted on the clarinet with only a mutter of muted trumpets and horns to accompany it on its way into the next movement. The links between the movements are in each case a single held note.

IV. *Epilogue*

'It is difficult to describe this movement analytically' says the composer in his own note. But the 'professional annotator' at whom he tilts has had a shot at it, and succeeded, perhaps with excessive ingenuity, in discovering thematic relationships with the second movement. But what the listener hears is not themes, but the 'drifts' and 'whiffs', as the composer calls them, of tonal stuff. The musical essence of this music is dynamic and motional—it is all soft and unhurried. Of course there have to be themes in which tone, dynamic, and motion can have their being, and the thematic material is in fact organized like a fugue, but to perform its emotional function in the symphony this finale behaves like a ghost.

What is its emotional function? The first answer is given by its name—it is an Epilogue. The Epilogue is a formal feature favoured by Vaughan Williams—the London Symphony has one, the F minor Symphony has an Epilogo Fugato, and the last tableau of *Job* is sub-titled Epilogue. The purpose of an epilogue would seem to be the opposite of the classical symphonists' concluding rondo, which seeks to relax the rigour of the argument. The epilogue seems rather to be there to draw out, albeit gently, the implicit and underlying nexus of thought in a sequence of movements. If an analyst discerns thematic resemblances to previous movements he is able to offer a technical warrant for an aesthetic perception that the movements are logical in their thought and

congruous in their emotional content. Technical and aesthetic criticisms should go together as far as possible in our musical perceptions—each fortifies the other. This ghostly Epilogue is the conclusion then of the anger of the first movement, the conflict of the second, the battery of the third.

Verbal interpretation of music, as we know, is only profitable in inverse ratio to the precision and rigour with which it is pressed. Mendelssohn thought that music was more precise than words; most people think that words are too precise, and therefore limiting, for musical meaning. It is agreed that the composer expresses in his music thoughts for which his listeners will find individually different (and always partial and inadequate) verbal expressions. But what the central thought of this symphony is, seems to me, as I have already declared, plain beyond the possibility of contradiction, however various each individual listener's reactions may be as to degrees of emphasis, shades of emotion, and the finer discriminations of words. To met his Epilogue spells out the emotional significance of the word 'aftermath'. The end of war is not triumph but dead-sea fruit. This is truth as a seer sees it, and, since prophecy is this vision of the seer, the music is prophetic not with the menace of an Old Testament prophet adjuring a contumacious people but with the cold asseveration of the scientist addressing an obtuse, or at least a careless generation. Here are the spiritual consequences of war.

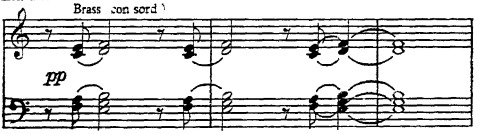
The movement is shaped like a fugue with exposition, episodes, contrapuntal devices (like augmentation), and a final section which departs from fugal convention in so far as the texture is not tightened to a climax but loosened to a dissolution (characteristically marked 'niente'). The fugue subject, if such it may be called, is a long sinuous theme:

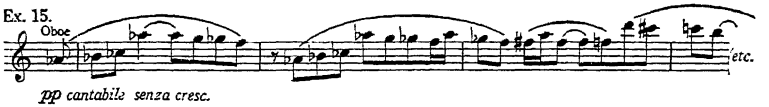
Ex. 13.

in which the element *a* has a family relationship with the string unison theme of the second movement (i.e. Ex. 9) and more

remotely with the first themes of the first movement (Exx. 1 and 2), and the element *b* with the drum tap and trumpet motif of the second movement (Ex. 6). The recurrence of *b* at intervals within the theme provides a positive and recognizable feature in an otherwise deliberately featureless tune. The first violins continue it in a looser configuration by way of a counter-subject, or what would be a counter-subject if this was a strict fugue. The fugal answer however is not forthcoming at once in the second violins, only a bit of free, but of course congruent, counterpoint. The answer comes in the violas. The next statement of the subject is given to the flutes but in augmentation; its answer is made by the cellos. The exposition is rounded off by a unison statement of the theme (slightly modified) by the other strings and a simultaneous statement (augmented and paraphrased) of the subject on the horns.

The first episode is a kind of sigh on the brass:

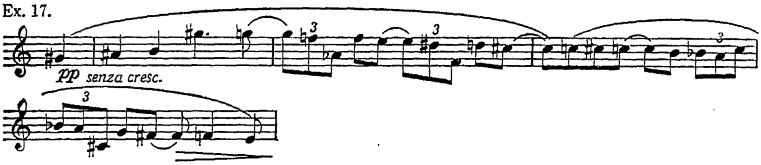
Ex. 14.

(The ear more often hears a descending than an ascending semitone, because the voice of the tenor trombone is more penetrating than horn or trumpet.) Ex. 14 is repeated on the strings and passages in thirds for wind recur on a thread of quaver motion (derived from Ex. 13). The thread is transferred to the oboe in a new version.

Ex. 15.

The injunction 'senza cresc.' is repeated over and over again, and pianissimo prevails throughout the movement. Even so the movement from this point steadily loses its vitality, save for

one more reassertion of the subject by the strings in unison in this form:

Ex. 16. Vlns.

The harp also spells out the augmented form of the subject. A second episode by the oboe solo is the last flicker of energy before it all dies away:

Ex. 17.

Ambiguity of inflexion is thus still at this late stage a feature of the music. A further ambiguity is the key. 'At the very end the strings cannot make up their mind whether to finish in E flat major or E minor. They finally decide on E minor which is, after all, the home key.' Even so the chord of E minor is not in root position. We are left with a question mark.

Concurrently with the composition of this symphony Vaughan Williams was engaged in writing music for the film *Scott of the Antarctic*, and the connexion between these two works and a projected *Sinfonia Antartica*, in so far as it can be unravelled, affords an insight into the working of the creative imagination and into the nature of music as a language. When the Epilogue was first heard it inevitably suggested 'something from another world' and every hearing confirms the view that in its context it is a 'prophecy', in the sense already defined, of what life is like in a desolate world, whether this world or the next. Now, while debate was proceeding on the question whether this ghostly fugue had any such meaning, the suggestion was mooted that the Sixth Symphony contained some of the Antarctic music of the film. Here then were two interpretations which at first glance seemed remote and incompatible, but are soon seen to be but two

manifestations of one basic idea—the desolation of a lost world. Music may not be able to write a news item about particular occurrences but it can certainly deal with concepts after its own fashion. The tone-poems of Strauss show how far music can be specific and particular and Wagner showed how music itself could be conceptually determined in its development. Here then we had something between the more immediate form of programme music and music absolutely determined by its fugal form but conveying nevertheless a clear conceptual meaning.

Mr. Martin Cooper, who saw only the most general connexion between the music and the times in which it was composed, who deprecated any closer identification with the war and was unaware of a possible polar significance, wrote in a programme analysis for the Leeds Festival of 1950:

> But the soft drift of the music covers them [i.e. some more defined melodic fragments] quickly, obliterating their contours and piling itself slowly and relentlessly over a limitless horizon until silence and nothingness swallow all.

What is that but the description by a percipient mind of a polar landscape? But if it is a polar landscape what is it doing in a war symphony? A third question is: if the symphony is neither about war nor the South Pole but is simply abstract music, what is the connexion of this shadowy fugue with the trumpets of the second movement, what indeed is the musical connexion between any of these four linked movements? The last question must be left to be answered by the absolutists who declare this to be Symphony No. 6 in E minor and nothing more. But those who admit the influence of a programme, whether in the reserved terms of Mr. Cooper's note [1] or of my own more specific but sharply questioned interpretation, will like to have the answers to the other questions, which were supplied by the late Ernest Irving, musical director

[1] 'It is useless to search for any preciser "programme" or to read esoteric philosophical interpretations into the music which expresses moods but neither depicts events nor embodies ideas—at least none clearly defined or important enough to the appreciation of the work for the composer to think it necessary to reveal them.'

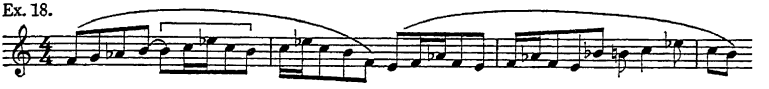
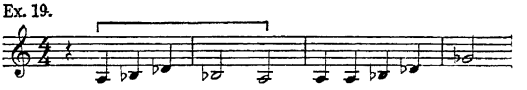
of the Ealing Film Studios where *Scott of the Antarctic* was made, who conducted the recording.

He settles the question whether any of the film music was used in the symphony—it was not. The composer himself confirms that there was no conscious connexion and complicates an already tangled puzzle by admitting that some thematic expressions used in another film, *The Flemish Farm*, were utilized in this symphony (see FILM MUSIC, p. 364). But the extraordinary character of this Epilogue forces upon every responsive listener the question of its meaning—for without some spiritual significance it does not fulfil its function as an epilogue to what has gone before, since musically the connexion is nil. Its meaning is plain: it is the ultimate desolation, whether spiritual or physical. Mr. Cooper's note, while deprecating any precise programme, describes its general nature in terms so evocative as to give the lie to his own caveat, and other commentators equally reluctant to attach extraneous meanings to the fugue have been forced to admit that there is a similarity between the desolation of the Antarctic and the desolation depicted in this Epilogue.

Historically some sort of kinship is possible because the composition of the two scores overlapped in 1947, and it is an elementary fact of psychology known to us all that association of ideas by mere contiguity in time or circumstance is not only possible but is a basic activity of the human mind. We now have both Epilogues and can compare them closely: it appears that the desolation of the Sixth Symphony is a deeper, because human, desolation than the inhuman desolation of the *Sinfonia Antartica*. Dead-sea fruit, a ruined world are the topics of the fugue; Polar wastes of the march movement. 'Desolation is the same thing if expressed by the South Pole, the battlefield, or the Elysian Fields', says Mr. Irving with truth, and it is the general, more than the particular, manifestations of it that music is bound by its very nature to portray.

The association of ideas is revealed by a thematic correspondence first pointed out by Mr. Desmond Shawe-Taylor: if the little piece of the fugue subject embodying the rise and fall of a minor third is compared with the opening horn theme of

'Landscape' in the Sinfonia it will be seen that the image of a desolate world, whether visual or conceptual or both together, has found a similarity of vocabulary in which to express itself:

Ex. 18.

Ex. 19.

The re-entrant minor third is also a feature of the soprano soloist's cadenza in the Epilogue of the *Sinfonia Antartica*, which resembles in general shape and function the oboe's final cadenza in this symphony.

Sinfonia Antartica

That there is a programme behind all of Vaughan Williams's symphonies should by now be clear beyond dispute. Sometimes it is unavowed but not difficult to discern, sometimes a title gives the clue, sometimes a literary motto attached (even if it is subsequently removed as in No. 5). But the *Sinfonia Antartica* is more specifically programme music than its predecessors, more so than Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, from which all the programme symphonies of the nineteenth century from Mendelssohn to Tchaikovsky ultimately derive. It is indeed a symphonic poem cast into a formal mould of a symphony in separate movements.

It is this prominence of the programmatic element that caused the composer to choose the Italian title rather than the honest English word 'symphony'—he did not wish to claim that this work belonged to the canon of his symphonies. That he did not number it No. 7 is of no significance since he has eschewed numbers for all his symphonies, and it is only his commentators who have been driven to commit the sin of enumeration for the sake of its sheer convenience.

There was some dispute when the work was first performed in January 1953—on the 14th and 15th in Manchester at Hallé

concerts and on the 21st at a Philharmonic concert in London—about the spelling of the title. Vaughan Williams called it *Sinfonia Antarctica*, but it was pointed out to him that though English derived 'arctic' straight from the Greek ἄρκτος the Italians had shed the middle *c* so that his chosen title was a linguistic solecism. To this argument he yielded, though he might have kept his *c* if he had gone completely Greek and called the work *Symphonia Antarctica*. The Italian form is official and correct.

The origin of the Sinfonia is the film, *Scott of the Antarctic*, for which Vaughan Williams provided music in 1949 (see p. 364). The musical director of the Ealing Film Studios, Ernest Irving, was responsible for the performance and recording of the film music and to him the *Sinfonia Antartica* is dedicated. He had a unique knowledge of the gestation of the symphony and he was good enough with the composer's concurrence to make it available. The music for the film was composed without previous acquaintance with Charles Frend's film. There may have been a few 'stills' of shots taken in Norway shown to him in an early stage of the negotiations but the inspiration of the music came from mastery by his imagination of the epic of Scott's expedition upon which the film was very strictly based: the music of 'Landscape' was not visually but conceptually inspired. And so deep did the insight go into the dramatic requirements of the situations depicted in the film that apart from some minor adjustments in timing, music and its visual counterpart were found to fit perfectly when, months later, the photography had been done and could be married to the sound-track. Irving has related[1] how Vaughan Williams wrote the Prelude which went with the 'main title' out of the blue with the sole briefing that it was to last about eighty-four seconds. The subject of the film was man's struggle against Nature—not our Mother Nature and kindly nurse, but brute Nature, indifferent and implacable. This music was dubbed over the scene of climbing the Great Glacier, which the composer had never seen, and the fit needed the alteration of not a note. This music is expanded into the Prelude of the *Sinfonia Antartica* and sets out quite clearly that the main subject

[1] Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, LXXVI, pp. 40–41.

of the symphony is the battle of man against Nature, with man in this case the defeated party. If this is Vaughan Williams's Eroica, it does not end, like Beethoven's, with the release of man's creative energies but of their relentless paralysis and extinction. The listener carries away from a hearing of the Sinfonia an unspoken moral—the spirit of man facing fearful odds and bravely accepting his loss of the battle.

Even while the film was being produced, i.e. during 1947, Vaughan Williams realized that something deeper had been stirred in him than incidental music and he was concerned, as the time drew on, whether the film would prevent him later on writing an Antarctic Symphony using the same themes which he had been slowly revolving in his mind. This was at the end of 1948; by June 1949 he was asking for the return of the scores and sketches so that he could start thinking about the symphonic version of the Antarctic, but by September it was not going well and had to wait a bit. But the long gestation served to do precisely what was needed to turn incidental music, mere fragments of description, as close to particular episodes as they could be made, into the universal themes and emotions proper to the broad generalizations of a symphony. Had the process of universalization been less complete the work could only have issued as a symphonic poem on the pattern of *Ein Heldenleben* (which describes a very different sort of heroism by generalizing from particular instances). As it is, the five separate movements show that the raw material of the film has been completely assimilated to the form and nature of a symphony. To make doubly certain of the metamorphosis of Scott and the Antarctic into Man's heroic endeavour against blind Nature, the composer has appended to each movement a poetic motto in which the general ideas embodied in the music find also a verbal expression. There is to be no mistake what this Sinfonia means, whatever may be said, denied, or left unsaid about the meaning of No. 6.

The orchestra employed is very large comprising triple woodwind, the usual strings and brass, three-part female chorus, soprano solo, celesta, harp, piano, organ, xylophone, glockenspiel and vibraphone, the usual drums, cymbals and triangle, two low-pitch

bells in B flat and D (in F if the low B flat bell is unobtainable) and a wind machine which is to be out of sight. The vibraphone is an instrument in which the percussive and the electrical principles are combined. It is like a xylophone but it has resonators with lids which open and shut by electricity so as to impart pulsation and extra duration to the note which is hit. It appeared first in dance bands, invaded serious music in Berg's *Lulu* and has been acclimatized to the English scene by Britten in his Spring Symphony. The organ has a vitally important solo in the middle movement, 'Landscape', and can only be omitted if the pitch is wrong or if it is non-existent in the place of performance.

The following analysis is based on the composer's own programme-note, which, though less derisory of this form of literature than was his note on the Sixth Symphony, does contain one little tilt at the 'official analyst', who is not a local government officer at the Town Hall but the writer of these analytical notes.

I. *Prelude*

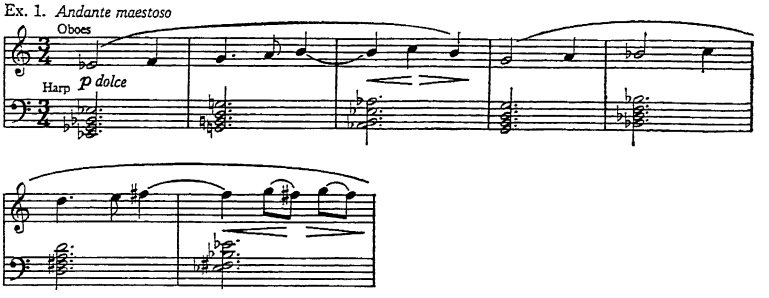
The first movement is styled 'Prelude' and is based on the themes used for the title music of the film. The poetic superscription is from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Act IV, l. 570:

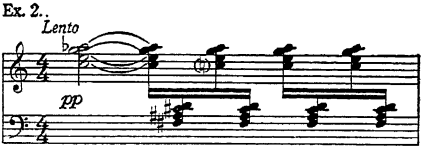
> To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite,
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night,
> To defy power which seems omnipotent,
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent:
> This . . . is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free,
> This is alone life, joy, empire and victory.

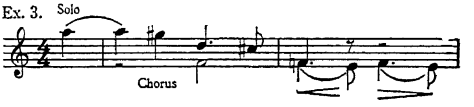
The form of the Prelude is simple tripartite but not ABA. It is ABC in which A is heroic adventure, B its Antarctic opponent, C the attack by man upon it. Here is no recapitulation but simple juxtaposition: formal unity is finally secured by the repetition of much of this music from the Prelude in the Epilogue. In section B there are four elements of which the first, the howling wilderness, is portrayed by the soprano solo and is recapitulated to enclose the second, third, and fourth elements, which are respectively

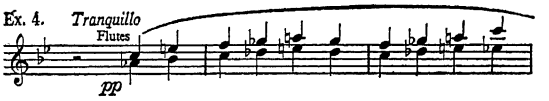
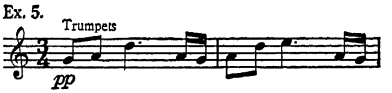
glaciality symbolized by the vibraphone, envelopment as it might be by fog or cold in a sinuous theme, and the fourth a new menace indicated by the deep bell. This is the only recapitulation to be found in this Prelude.

The title theme of the film and the motto theme of the symphony is this:

Ex. 1. *Andante maestoso*

The left hand indicates the harmonies on the harp, pizzicato strings, and trombones with which the oboe tune is accompanied. The oboes are doubled by trumpet. This single rising theme is repeated and extended with the normal full orchestra carrying it, augmented only by the pianoforte which serves to give a firm cutting edge to the determined upthrust of the theme in the bass. The end of the section is quite clear—it is a common chord of G major. For the second section the time changes to 4 in a bar, the speed to lento, the tone colour to the sharp and brittle sounds of xylophone and piano now playing martellato:

Ex. 2.

This forms a prelude to the entry of the voice singing without words:

Ex. 3.

The choice of voices for the uninhabited Antarctic met with opposition in the film studio, which was however quelled by Irving. Their use is certainly paradoxical since one would expect them to suggest the presence of humanity, but so long as they are kept in the distance their sound is unearthly; *voix blanches* have an impersonal enough sound and the particular kind of sustained continuous sound smoother than strings, remoter than flutes, aloof, and if emotionally coloured at all, suggestive of desolation. Holst had used them for a somewhat similar purpose at the end of Neptune in *The Planets*. They are accompanied by the wind machine.

In the next paragraph of this middle section the glacial aspect of the terrain appears when to the piano now playing its chords Alberti fashion is added the glockenspiel tick-tacking in semitone figures and the celesta executing rapid runs. This is ice, made blue with the vibraphone which plays chords of four notes. The third idea threads these glacial noises on a see-saw sinuous theme in which there is more movement—the wind or something is getting up—whatever it is it comes to a climax and stops dead. The eerie business starts again, quietly now, on flutes while above them the violins grind semitonally against each other tremolando:

Now comes the bell which the composer says was 'supposed, in the film, to be menacing'. Ex. 3 returns to complete this section. The antagonists are in the ring. Man makes the first move against Nature in a clarion call

which introduces the coda, founded on Ex. 1 but now in a different rhythm and flattened out in contour, against which the fanfare Ex. 5 can thrust itself.

II. *Scherzo*

If the first movement sets the stage for spiritual conflict, the next two movements are geographically descriptive—the first a Scherzo, the second a slow movement entitled 'Landscape'; the first a study in natural history, the second a study it would seem in geology. In the Scherzo there is life, animal life, and there are the ships bearing men on their way to confront their antagonist. There is a resemblance between this Scherzo and that of the Sea Symphony written more than forty years before, a resemblance even in one of the themes. Thus Ex. 6, which the composer in his own note describes as a little wisp of theme, is very near to the opening theme of the third movement of the Sea Symphony (Ex. 8 of Sea Symphony, p. 7).

Ex. 6.

Neither this specific resemblance nor the more general resemblance of ships moving in great waters is any cause for surprise. It is not a question of reminiscence. Music is a language and though its currency is more limited, so that composers do not invariably employ the same idioms as one another in turning a visual image or a conceptual idea into musical terms, there is even on this universal plane more agreement than is sometimes recognized, and in the individual composer the same image will inevitably create the same musical equivalent for its expression.

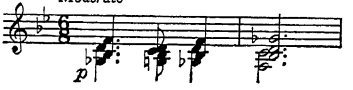
The literary superscription of the movement is

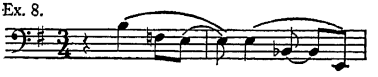
> There go the ships
> and there is that Leviathan
> whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein.

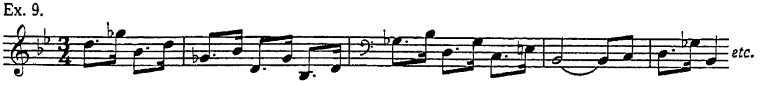
from Psalm 104.

It opens with a short motif on the horns, quite firm and compact to stand, as it were, for the deck of the ship from which the surrounding swirl of waters is surveyed. The swirl consists of

harp glissando, drum-roll, strings tremolando, and clarinets in wavy arpeggio. The horn motif is

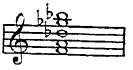
Ex. 7. *Moderato*

This is taken up, repeated, and expanded while the scoring becomes more tense though more fluid in semiquaver movement. It also becomes more animated at the moment when the trumpet relieves the horns of Ex. 7 and plays Ex. 6, which is plainly a motif from the same root idea. It extends itself into a shape which imparts a good deal of 12/8 quaver motion to the rest of the movement. Ex. 6 and this extension are transferred to the strings, clarinets keep up their wave motion and the whole score is awash for several pages. But a more rigid rhythm is produced by a change from compound to simple time, which heralds the approach of Leviathan. Here he is:

Ex. 8.

without his tail but pushing into the waves on the dark and edgy instrumentation of cor anglais, clarinets, including the bass of the species, and bassoon. This theme was actually used in the film to represent whales. Penguins follow,

Ex. 9.

again on clarinets and bassoons but descending to tuba and double-bassoon on their first approach. They disport themselves in a shorter version of Ex. 9 with less surrounding accompaniment. This, says the composer, is the section which the official analyst would call the Trio. So indeed he might, but he would look in vain for the subsequent return of the Scherzo. The 12/8 rhythm reappears and with it some sort of suggestion of Ex. 6 but the movement soon ends, dying away in a mist, or as the composer

puts it, 'on an indefinite chord', formed by two chords swaying a chromatic semitone and finally coalescing:

Ex. 10.



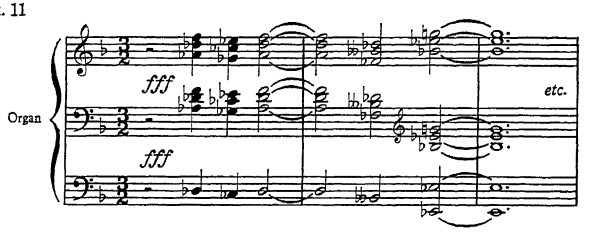
III. *Landscape*

The third movement is at once the core of the symphony, the most original in conception, the most powerful in imagination, and the one in which the composer at the age of eighty breaks what is for him new ground. It was said of the London Symphony that something of the impressionist methods then recently exploited by Debussy went to its composition, but when all is said in favour of that view the London Symphony remains essentially a thematic structure with its tunes, not its orchestration, as its most prominent feature. The musical interest of 'Landscape' is that it is music-making by means of orchestral sonorities. True, there are themes, because music is a matter of notes of definite pitch and measures of definite duration, but pitch and time in this movement are no more than the base in which orchestration inheres, like the paraffin wax which is the base of an ointment whose medicinal properties are the drugs that inhere in it. It is in this movement that the very large orchestral forces are fully deployed. This is tone-painting on the grandest possible scale and its literary motto, though less tremendous, is at any rate a summary of what a glacier is, though it is of an Alpine glacier that Coleridge speaks, not a frozen continent of high mountains such as exists at the South Pole.

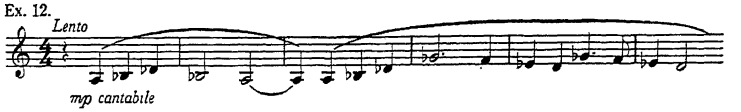
> Ye ice falls! Ye that from the mountain's brow
> Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
> Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
> And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
> Motionless torrents! Silent cataracts!
>
> From 'Hymn before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni'.

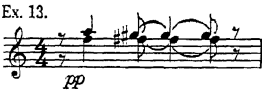
The form of the music consists of a stream of sound hung upon thematic material of little interest either in itself or for potential

development, proceeding until it meets a blank wall in the shape of terrific chords on the organ. These chords

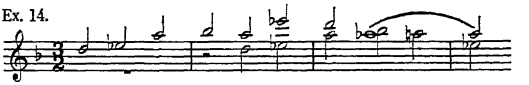
Ex. 11

given out with the full power of the organ are intended to stand out from the sound texture, though cues are provided for full brass, woodwind and strings in case an organ is not available. But their significance as the unassailable peak, the impenetrable mass, the unscalable wall, or whatever the picture that forms in the individual listener's mind, depends largely on the use of uncompromising organ tone—after all the values in this movement are entirely those of sonority. In view of the literary quotation at the head of the music it is in the composer's intention probably the 'ice falls', sheer walls of unscalable ice, but to my mind when I first heard it it somehow conveyed an even more elemental impression—it was the geological core of the terrain, a pre-Cambrian outcrop of gneisses. Readers of Jacquetta Hawkes's *A Land* will recall that in it by poetic insight she intermingles time and matter to make a history of Britain. She shows how the behaviour of molten matter under pressure of the immense processes of time has made the world on which we walk. This Polar landscape has its geology as well as its visual appearance, and while visibly it is all white and geographically it is a climate of wind and cold, beneath is its geological foundation (from which, incidentally, we learn that its climate was once sub-tropical). We glimpse through this Antarctic landscape created by the musician's imagination—for he has never seen it and had arrived at it entirely through Scott's journal and perhaps Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World*—a picture of the world before the hills in order stood or earth received her frame, elemental matter, the elements.

The composer's own note points out some of the thematic threads on which the sounds of icicles are threaded but they have less significance than analysis normally attaches to thematic quotations. The movement opens—and closes—with a muted horn-call:

Ex. 12.

In this theme a resemblance has been seen to part of the fugue subject of the Epilogue of the Sixth Symphony—the rise and fall of the minor third. It emerges from a shimmer of drum and cymbal rolls and harp glissandi ('up and down as rapid as possible') in which the flutes, which are important throughout the movement for their white tone, chill the air with the bite of their dissonance:

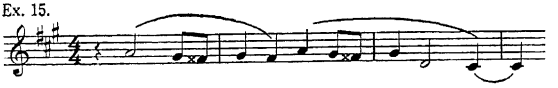
Ex. 13.

The flute wail is extended and more ice is added to the mixture by glockenspiel, celesta, and piano—the harp glissandi cease and chords take their place—as the time quickens from lento to andante moderato. The thing is held together by a slow-moving, descending theme in the heavy brass; for music must by its own nature move forward in time even when it depicts immobility and time standing still. There is now added to the texture still more movement in the shape of triplet chords on the horns and the tone is increasing. Then it all stops. It starts again with an immensely slow theme in octaves sub and super on strings and woodwind with the brass following in imitation:

Ex. 14.



Up and down go these lines getting nowhere and at one point pausing on a sustained chord while Ex. 12 is heard high up on the flute. The flutes now take charge, though others, notably the

xylophone, join them. A new flat and featureless theme is also propounded on the strings:

Ex. 15.

Round this more positive motives are grouped, triplets, arabesques, low notes on the tuba and the organ pedal which build up into a big climax for the return fortissimo of Ex. 14 against which is suddenly hurled the progression of organ chords of Ex. 11 preceded by a crash on the gong. The organ solo is interspersed with runs, rumbles, and glissandi from the instruments which are capable of them, and out of this antiphony finally projects on wind and strings with the piccolo at the top a high B natural. Nothing seems to be able to stop this whistle and it does actually provide the link, like those in the Sixth Symphony, with the next movement.

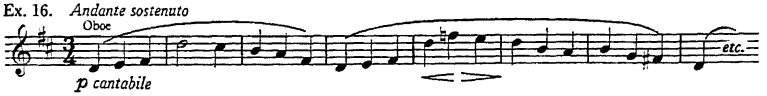
IV. *Intermezzo*

The Intermezzo is a slighter movement and is explained by the motto from Donne's 'The Sun Rising':

> Love, all alike, no season knows, or clime,
> Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

After the inhumanity of Nature its human antagonist must have his say, and whether the particular reference of the original music in the film is to the explorer's wife and all the human values risked in the desperate adventure or not, it seems clear from the reference to Oates's death music at the end of this symphonic intermezzo that the conversion of a bit of programmatic film music into a symphonic andante has here, as elsewhere, transformed the particular into the universal. It has been suggested therefore that this movement symbolizes the ties that bind men together, but love of whatever sort played but a small part in the epic battle and formally the Intermezzo serves the purpose of contrast and relief between two movements of monumental and icy grandeur.

It is founded on three themes, of which the first hovering between major and minor may stand for a wave of homesickness:

Ex. 16. *Andante sostenuto*

Accompanied by close chords on the harp this tune is transferred from one instrument to another and its accompaniment is expanded till the whole orchestra barring the supplementary instruments is involved. The cor anglais echoes the first phrase by way of codetta before the second section, which is marked allegretto. The tune of this section which continues in much the same mood of separation and nostalgia in B minor is

Ex. 17.

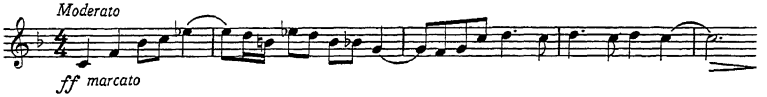
This is subjected to the same kind of expanding treatment, until it is cut short by the knell for Oates in great chords with the menacing bell once more. After this complete section which is all of it soft there is a coda which reverts to Ex. 16 taken up in canon by woodwind soloists. It is noteworthy that there is very little conscious contrivance to link the sections of this, or the other, movements together. Their emotional congruence or contrast is so clear that juxtaposition is enough and the sections in themselves are not so long as to lose their identity in the listener's mind.

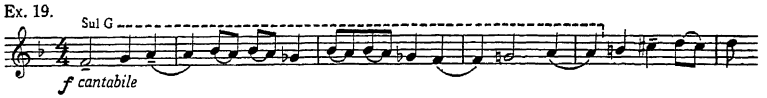
V. *Epilogue*

The finale, which bears Vaughan Williams's favourite formal term Epilogue, is founded upon an extract from Captain Scott's last journal:

> I do not regret this journey; we took risks, we knew we took them, things have come out against us, therefore we have no cause for complaint.

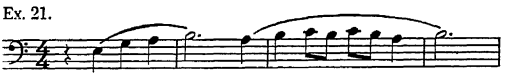
Humanity flings its final challenge at the elements in a trumpet fanfare:

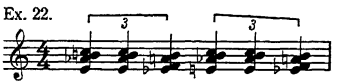
Ex. 18.

Horns take it up against a huge orchestral (and pianistic) tremolando; then the trombones and the heavy basses have it. Finally the strings seize it and modifying its angular contour turn it into a march—so:

Ex. 19.

This is a relation of Ex. 1, 'obviously suggested by the opening of the Prelude', says the composer. It runs to 16 + 8 bars of mounting energy. This main march tune is completed by a new theme with an off-the-beat accompaniment:

Ex. 20.

But this brave show is checked and the music shivers, although the clarinets keep up a strong diatonic bit of tune:

Ex. 21.

More important than the tune however, which is but a thematic thread, is the heavy triplet accompaniment of the horns, trumpets, and woodwind:

Ex. 22.

This marks the centre-point of the movement and represents the final catastrophe. It is an expansion of the music associated in the

film with the blizzard which finally defeated Scott and his companions. It includes a passage for a bassoon solo of the kind sometimes used in similarly bleak contexts by Sibelius, but the triplets of Ex. 22 return in greater strength at the end of what the official analyst might very well claim to be a trio section of the march. The march itself returns but with its constituent themes Exx. 19 and 20 in reverse order. A second trio brings back the music of the Prelude, deep bell, voices, wind machine and all, from the second section of the first movement, followed by the first subject Ex. 1. This is now a lament for the failure of the forlorn hope. Out of it grows a coda in which the voices are the important element though lower strings and timpani support them. The soprano sings a wailing passage of descending cadenza, which resembles in shape and function the similar cadenza for oboe at the end of the Sixth Symphony. Voices and wind machine alternate with it and the music dies away from the desolate continent. Blind Nature has triumphed and the ultimate desolation continues until the next cosmic change makes the Antarctic seas once more sub-tropical and supporting life.

Some objection has been taken to the use of the wind machine, which is a relic from the film music. It is, say the objectors, an unnecessary incursion of realism into what is being quite successfully accomplished by the methods of musical suggestion. It is true that the instrument needs to be kept out of sight as the composer prescribes and not too energetically played. But there is surely no more aesthetic objection to its use in principle than to the use of onomatopoeic words in poetry, which is as old as language, or to the appearance of the cuckoo in Beethoven's and Delius's scores when his presence is demanded by the subject of the work. If the effect is well managed and the singers also are kept well behind the scenes to suggest distance, the final bars achieve a curious and eerie effect in which onomatopoeic noise and pianissimo tone blend into a mere murmur of sound. If the pitch of the wind machine can be made to fall to the E flat sung by the voices so much the more do the sounds merge.

Orchestral Music

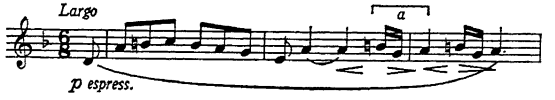
Introduction

THE SIX SYMPHONIES stand apart in Vaughan Williams's output, but he has written orchestral music all his life, beginning with the Norfolk Rhapsodies and the Symphonic Impression *In the Fen Country*, composed immediately after his folk-song collecting experiences in East Anglia in 1904. No folk-songs are used in *In the Fen Country*; the Rhapsodies, of which only one, the first in E minor, now survives, were founded on them. Some account of them will be found on p. 229 where works incorporating actual folk-tunes are discussed and the sources of the tunes indicated. After *In the Fen Country* came *The Wasps*, incidental music composed for the Cambridge Greek Play of 1909. From then on the tale grows multifarious, small works succeeding big, occasional works occurring sporadically, spanning the whole range from the Tallis Fantasia (1910) to the Concerto Grosso for amateur string players (1950).

In the Fen Country

Roughly contemporary with the Norfolk Rhapsodies, *In the Fen Country* is described as a Symphonic Impression, and the disposition of the music is like the impressionism that was being applied at the turn of the century to instrumental music for piano and orchestra, especially to any music that derived its inspiration from visual impressions. Vaughan Williams had just been doing his folk-song collecting in East Anglia when he composed *In the Fen Country*. The score bears the inscription in the composer's own hand: Composed April 1904; Revised 1905 and 1907; Orchestration revised 1935.

Unlike the Norfolk Rhapsodies it contains no folk-tunes, but

the melody which begins, ends, and dominates the piece opens rather like a folk-song:

The scoring is elaborate, requiring third flute, cor anglais, and bass clarinet beside the standard specification. The form is something like a simple rondo, in which instead of episodes there are developments from the simple and almost unadorned melody to a very complex and impressionistically orchestrated texture. At the second appearance of the tune it is not quite the same tune but an augmented version in triple time on the oboe. Again the texture thickens and quickens and thins out. The first tempo, mood, and expression return with the tune, Ex. 1 in its old form, and its pendant semiquavers, figure *a*, are worked as in the opening but with much less inflation of the texture, which fines away to nothing.

This then is the first orchestral work and represents along with the Norfolk Rhapsodies an attempt to achieve by means of the current practices of nationalism, such as are to be seen at work successfully in Smetana and Dvořák, an independence of German symphonic methods.

Overture to The Wasps

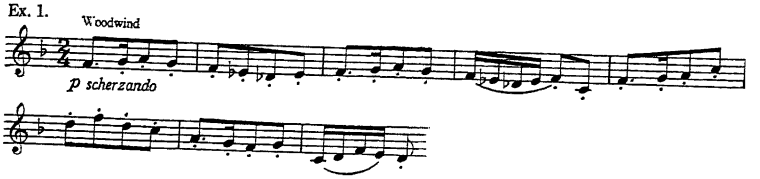
The incidental music for *The Wasps* of Aristophanes was composed for performance at Cambridge in 1909. There is a long tradition at Oxford and Cambridge of staging the tragedies and comedies of the Greek dramatists in a form that is a compromise with antiquity. They are given in the original language but are not staged, as at Bradfield College, in the open-air, nor is any attempt made at imitating what little is known of ancient Greek music. What is known of the Attic theatre is that the choruses were

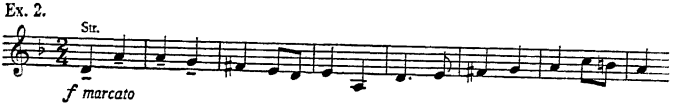
chanted and in some cases danced on the dancing floor (orchestra) in front of the stage. In order to bring the plays to dramatic life the conventions of a modern theatre with proscenium arch are accepted and the music is frankly composed in modern idiom—Greek music appears to have been entirely monodic. These productions are always backed by classical scholarship but they are infused by the spirit of amateur theatricals. In the case of Aristophanic comedies—*The Birds*, *The Frogs*, *The Wasps*, *The Clouds*, *The Acharnians* have all come in for academic production—the zest of undergraduate fun is turned to account. But Aeschylus no less than Aristophanes has had his share of revival and composers who have taken part in these periodical productions at both Universities have been Parratt, Macfarren, Parry (who wrote music for the *Agamemnon* as well as three plays of Aristophanes), Stanford, C. H. Lloyd, Charles Wood, Tertius Noble who anticipated Vaughan Williams in *The Wasps*, and in a later generation Walter Leigh, Robin Orr, and Patrick Hadley, both before and after he became Professor of Music at Cambridge.

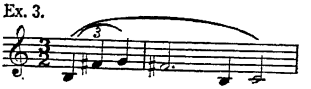
The Wasps overture has now a firm place for itself in the concert room, though the choral portions of the dramatic music have naturally not survived. It is valuable historically in that it shows the modal influence of folk-song having secured a firm footing in Vaughan Williams's personal style. The overture is in an orthodox sonata form. The orchestration is for small orchestra with accessories, i.e. there are no trombones and only two horns, and one trumpet suffices until far on in the recapitulation. A harp however is an important requisite and the percussion involves besides timpani, a big drum, cymbals, and a triangle. The themes are taken from the characters in the play.

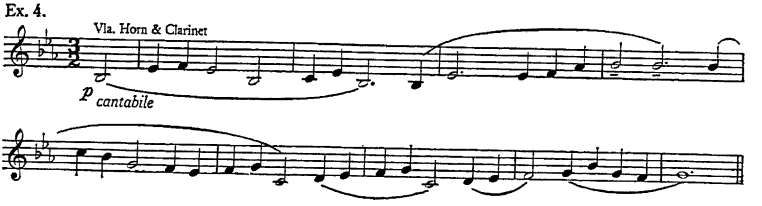
The overture begins with the buzzing of the wasps, who are for Aristophanes the dicasts, i.e. those Athenian citizens whose passion for litigation was reinforced by the payments they received for sitting on the bench of judges. The trills and *cuivré* notes on the horn and sharp pizzicato notes which make up the music of the angry wasps is an introduction, to which there is a further reference in the development section. The first two tunes refer to Philocleon, one of the old men who are left behind to man the

jury panels in time of war, when they can neither fight nor carry on their businesses. They are

Ex. 1.

in which the flattened sixth and seventh give bite to his zeal, and

Ex. 2.

which indicates his fundamental honesty. For Aristophanes, though venomous as ever against Cleon, is sorry for the misguided but essentially decent Philocleon. After suitable repetition and expansion these two tunes are put together in counterpoint. The bridge passage to the second subject is marked by a change to a three-bar rhythm (Beethoven's *ritmo di tre battute*) in which fragments of Ex. 1 are flicked against harp arpeggios and from which emerges a bit of tune on a solo violin, which is a presage of the second subject. This bit of tune, which also occurs in the development, is

Ex. 3.

The big tune of the second subject represents Bdelycleon (who hates the demagogue Cleon) and his reconciliation with his father Philocleon (who loves him):

Ex. 4.

The development consists of the working of the first bars of Ex. 1 to produce animation with references to Ex. 3 and the buzz of the wasps. The recapitulation is normal, to the point of having Ex. 2 in F instead of D but having the second subject played in combination with Ex. 1. There is a short coda based on Ex. 1 at an increased speed.

A suite of four short orchestral movements was also extracted from the music of the Greek Play and is sometimes heard. It consists of two entractes, separated by a March of the Kitchen Utensils and a concluding Ballet and Final Tableau. This last is a polite equivalent for the ancient κόρδαξ, a relic of the broad indecencies of the Old Comedy. Aristophanes' final shaft of ridicule is directed at Carcinus, a rival poet, whose sons are made to dance. Philocleon, tipsy and sleepy in the Cambridge production, follows them off the stage trying to imitate their movements. Vaughan Williams's *cordax* begins allegro vivacissimo, becomes più mosso and finishes presto.

The Kitchen Utensils movement, called in the score of the Greek Play, 'March Past of the Witnesses', are the pot, pestle and water-jug, which are summoned as witnesses of good character for an unfortunate dog who is to be tried for a theft of cheese. Bdelycleon has persuaded his father that he can satisfy his legal passions harmlessly at home and produces two dogs to argue before him. This too is another satirical shaft aimed at Cleon, who had recently prosecuted a decent soldier for some incident in the Sicilian campaign. All the pieces of the Suite are slight and as high-spirited as the comedy requires.

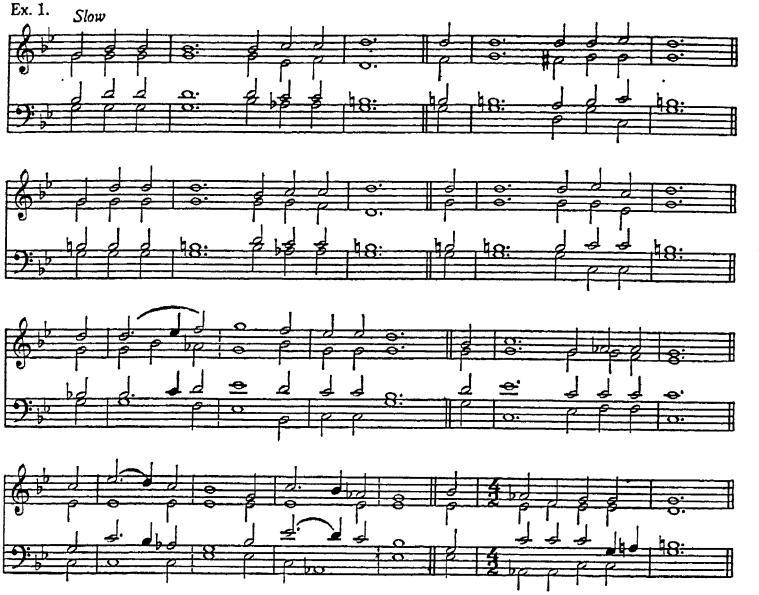
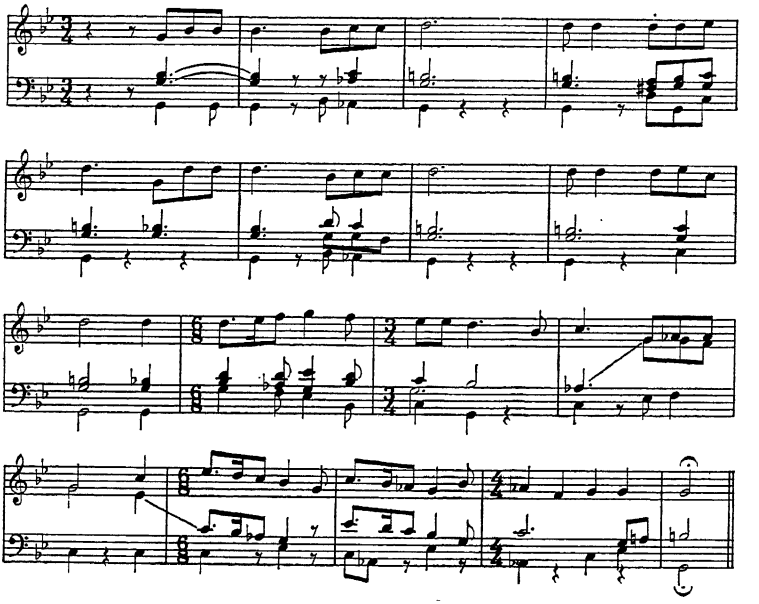
But they are of course not Greek but English. It is an example of the art of music being enriched by classical literature in the same sort of way, but of much rarer occurrence, that English literature has been enriched by Greek.

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

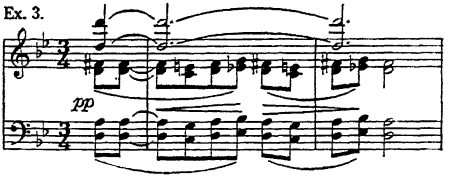
With the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* for Double String Orchestra, produced at Queen's Hall by Beecham in 1909

and repeated at the Gloucester Festival in the following year, Vaughan Williams declared himself to the world as a new force in English music. It had been apparent from *Toward the Unknown Region* at the Leeds Festival of 1907 that a new composer with something to say in the choral tradition had arrived, but that admirable cantata can be appreciated in terms of Brahms and Parry. The Tallis Fantasia is quite another matter; in it is found one of the forces that have emancipated not only one composer but English music as a whole from continental influences. Folk-song was the other, of which signs were manifested in the Norfolk Rhapsodies of 1906 and *The Wasps* incidental music of 1909. Here the influence of the Elizabethans is both direct and pervasive.

The two revivals, of folk-song and the Elizabethans, were in full swing and exercising to the maximum their beneficial fertilizing influence in the first decade of the twentieth century. The most conspicuous technical feature common to both is their modality. The ordinary tonality of the major-minor key system seemed to be dissolving in extreme chromaticism or sheer exhaustion. Neo-modalism, if only a *reculement pour mieux sauter*, offered a way round the impasse of three centuries of harmonic development. All that had been learned of modulation could be applied to the other scales, over and above the Ionian and the Aeolian which had dominated the major-minor key system. Flattened sevenths, their chief distinguishing feature, became positively fashionable. The tune of Tallis which Vaughan Williams took as his theme is in the Third or Phrygian mode, of which the characteristic intervals are a flat second, a flat third, a flat sixth, and a flat seventh. Tallis composed the tune in 1567 for Archbishop Parker's metrical Psalter, one of nine which he contributed to that book which was actually printed but for some reason suppressed from publication. Vaughan Williams restored this one to the currency of public worship by printing it in *The English Hymnal* in 1906 as the tune for Addison's hymn 'When rising from the bed of death' (No. 92). Here are his two harmonizations of it:

Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

The theme is not at once stated in its entirety but after its opening phrase is interrupted by a phrase of swaying chords which acts as a kind of recurrent refrain:

Ex. 3.



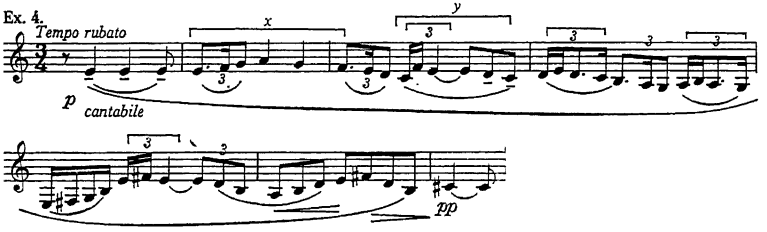
So early appears the use of parallel consecutive fifths to give a strong bass line that was to become such a sign manual of the composer's style as to be irreverently called the 'Back-to-Hucbald' movement. The theme is then given out in full with the harmonization of the skeleton shown in Ex. 2 in nine parts.

The lay-out is for string orchestra, smaller string orchestra, and solo quartet, and much of the antiphony is dependent on the differentiation in weight of tone and geographical position, where practicable, of the disparate forces. They are not however immediately set out in separate array: the nine-part harmony of the opening bars and the subsequent harmonization of the tune in five real parts is realized by the tutti. The tune is repeated, as is the way with tunes, with the texture further enriched by a semiquaver counterpoint of swaying arpeggios (in sixths) on the second violins. There is an elaborate cadence with echo formed out of the four-in-a-bar termination of the tune (cf. Exx. 1 and 2). This constitutes an exposition. Now the orchestras divide and antiphony begins. Antiphony is better served with short phrases than with long self-subsistent tunes. We therefore find that the first and larger of the two orchestras reinforced by the solo quartet plays the opening bars of Ex. 2 and is answered by Ex. 3 on the second orchestra. This constitutes the second idea of this fantasia.

What is a fantasia? The fantasia of Tallis's day was the forerunner of the fugue in that a thread of theme was enunciated and taken up by other parts, then dropped in favour of another akin

to it which was similarly treated. None of these pieces of melody was developed further as in a fugue. The scheme is derived from the madrigal. Vaughan Williams's fantasia is not of the strict Elizabethan sort but it does proceed in sections of which the material is inter-related. There is however very little imitative writing in it. Antiphony is preferred to contrapuntal imitation but the basic form is madrigalian.

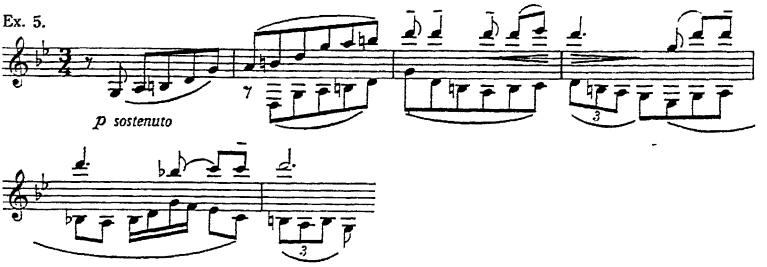
What corresponds to the third couplet of a madrigal is a new melodic idea given out by the viola solo:



New, but derived from the second part of Tallis's tune. It is furthermore a member of the family of themes associated in the composer's mind with *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is treated in double antiphony from the two orchestras and is repeated, as all well-behaved tunes are repeated, by the solo violin. The three forces, solo quartet and two string orchestras (each complete with double-bass), now develop a web of great complexity in which figure *x* of Ex. 4 is much used in alternation with derivatives from Ex. 3. The three forces coalesce for the climax of this development section, in which the little figure *y* of Ex. 4 becomes prominent.

After a short section, as it might be a homophonic line in a madrigal, molto adagio, in which strongly flavoured triads in root position E major, E flat minor, B minor, B flat minor, and F minor are set in powerful juxtaposition, a return is made to the first presentation of the opening phrase of Ex. 2. But the recapitulation is not a mere repetition. Both orchestras drop into a tremolando *sur la touche* and the main business is carried on in a duet between solo violin and solo viola thus:

Ex. 5.



But as the tune gets under way in the solo violin the orchestral violins join in. The second idea (Ex. 3) is also recalled and richly harmonized. There is a sudden hush and by way of coda the solo violin soars on a phrase of similar shape to Ex. 6. The work ends on a chord of G major. Its main tonality is certainly G, but the fluctuating inflexions of flat and sharp, the false relations of the very first bar prove that the fantasia owes not only its theme and the outlines of its form but its harmonic 'neo-modality' to its Tudor father.

If a detailed dissection seems to represent this fantasia as so called because of the modern connotation of the word as something wayward and bound by no formal conventions, the work in performance gives the opposite impression, that it is almost seamless. Its organic unity it owes to the close congruity of all its thematic material. But it is also a fact that the composer worked over it in two revisions, in 1913 and 1919. The work in its definitive form has the solidity and grandeur of a cathedral, to which its strains seem to belong by a natural affinity. It has passed into the repertory of all the great orchestras of the world. Its intense Englishness has been no bar to international understanding, whatever may have been said along those lines about other of Vaughan Williams's compositions.

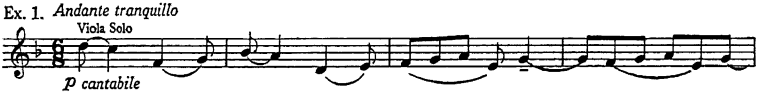
Partita for Double String Orchestra

The Partita for Double String Orchestra is a late revision (1948) of what had first appeared as a Double String Trio in D minor,

which had its first performance by the Menges Quartet and their associates in January 1939. Although it was careful not to call itself a sextet, its antiphony of two trios was never clear enough to impress itself upon the ear. It appears to have had some revision in order to strengthen it, but still in 1942, at a National Gallery concert to celebrate the composer's seventieth birthday, the scoring did not seem to be completely effective, and the prophetic view was expressed that the work had even then probably not reached its final form. It was played three times during the National Gallery war-time concerts.

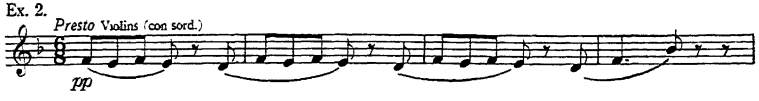
The final revision was more drastic and was designed to make the antiphony clearer along the lines that had proved satisfactory in the eighteenth-century concerto grosso—by an equilibrium of unequal forces. The two string orchestras work to a deliberate handicapping: the first orchestra is without double-basses, and the second orchestra is to be quite twice the strength of the first. There are no second violins in either orchestra. The four movements, Prelude, Scherzo Ostinato, Intermezzo, and Fantasia, are surely a combination without parallel in the history of the suite. The second movement perhaps owes something to Holst (in the *St. Paul's Suite*); the Intermezzo is inscribed 'Homage to Henry Hall'. Syncopations, Scotch snaps, shifted accents, cross-rhythms abound not only in the movement dedicated to the jazz dance-band leader, but throughout. Indeed the starting-point of the whole work in the composer's mind would seem to be more rhythmic than textural—hence the long search for a satisfactory setting.

The Prelude starts off with a grunted Scotch snap, which is apt to recur whenever in any part a further kick of impetus is needed. The first tune has a less snappy snap, more like one of Purcell's trochaic measures:

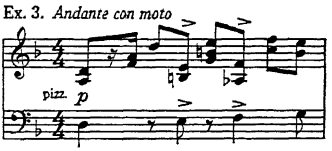
Ex. 1. *Andante tranquillo*

The movement is loosely constructed, a true Prelude, founded on these two ideas, but diversified by an occasional burst of semi-

quavers or an irregular gruppetto, and leading without a break into the Scherzo.

The ostinato of this second movement consists of only four notes, as does the similar example in the *St. Paul's Suite*, but they are ingeniously contrived to give a maximum both of repetition and variety:

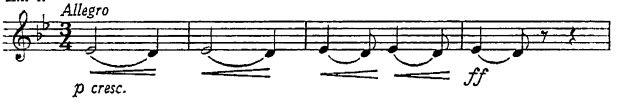
Ex. 2.

Below it a bass proceeds scalewise downwards by the same three notes, F E D; soon after a melody, equally rudimentary, is thrown upwards, F B flat C D, which is thereafter imitated, or extended or chromaticized. As the texture thickens the second orchestra plays heavily thrummed chords which lead to a change of key from D minor to D major. This is the sign for the ostinato to adopt a new form, more like a moto perpetuo. There is a pursuit through a number of keys without let-up of the new ostinato but with fragments of melody flying off. We have had what is the usual two sections of a normal scherzo and we now have its trio, built on Ex. 2 in augmentation. It is sufficient to round the movement off with a mere allusion to Ex. 1.

The sincerest form of homage is imitation and Mr. Henry Hall is saluted in the Intermezzo dedicated to him with this pattern of rhythm and accent:

Ex. 3. *Andante con moto*

played by the second orchestra. Delayed accents are a feature too of the melodies which sprout above this figuration in the first orchestra. Again the texture thickens, the first violin of the concertino orchestra finally breaking into running semiquavers, but the first idea recurs so as to create the ternary form proper to

an Intermezzo. The rhythm of Ex. 3 had not been abandoned in the middle section but it had suffered some minor modifications; it reasserts itself at the fortissimo juncture where the first of the melodies makes its unmistakable return. But the reprise is short and quickly loses weight to make a characteristically quiet ending.

The plan of the final Fantasia is a series of short sections in which different but congruous ideas follow each other, as in the Elizabethan fantasia, but without the quasi-fugal texture which that early form of instrumental chamber music borrowed from the madrigal. The unifying rhythmic germ is the alternative distribution of six quavers in a bar of 3/4 time, which continually breaks down into 6/8, as in the opening bars thus:

Ex. 4.

Note the dynamic marking of this motive. The first section introduces rushing semiquavers, the second something that starts like a bit of melody, the third uses this melody for counterpoint; in the fourth semiquavers return; in the fifth the basic idea of Ex. 4 is emphatically recalled, as also in the seventh it is recalled more briefly; the sixth is a more melodious and euphonious version of the pattern; the eighth section is canonical between the orchestras; number nine is calm, number ten entwines it with off-the-beat pizzicato chords, an effect which is intensified in section eleven and maintained against the reassertion of Ex. 4 in the twelfth section. The thirteenth and fourteenth sections are virtual recapitulations of the second and third sections; in the fourteenth the six parts are busy going their own ways and dragging a short phrase across the bar lines; in the fifteenth a reaction sets in and the same phrase literally pulls itself together; in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth sections we are back with the fundamental rhythmic alternation made plain in a sort of homophony. The nineteenth and last section is only an expiring coda. Fantasia is thus a non-committal name for a set of variations, that would like

to call itself a passacaglia but dare not for the strictness implied in that austere term.

The work is short (twenty minutes) and a light-weight. Because of its concentration on rhythmic interest it is exhilarating to hear—at the very opposite pole of artistic purpose and effect to the Tallis Fantasia, with which it is comparable in layout.

Works for Solo Instruments with Orchestra

Introduction

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S works for solo instruments with orchestra are all on a fairly small scale. The viola is content with a suite; the Oboe and the Piano and the Violin Concertos have three movements apiece but are still deliberate in their avoidance of anything like the nineteenth-century conception of a concerto. The violin has also a miniature concerto in the shape of *The Lark Ascending*, which is described as a Romance. The Violin Concerto in D minor was originally called Concerto Accademico as an act of defiance against all the big-bow-wow concertos from the Emperor on to Rachmaninov, or, in terms of the violin, from Beethoven to Sibelius via Mendelssohn, Max Bruch, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky. The Concerto Accademico is all that those things are not—it derives straight from the eighteenth-century concertos of Handel and Bach.

The Piano Concerto exists in two forms, having been revised for two players in the solo part for a St. Cecilia concert in 1946, when it was played by Miss Phyllis Sellick and Mr. Cyril Smith in the revised form. The Oboe Concerto of 1944 is a light-weight, as is indicated in the titles of the three constituent movements, and is scored for strings only. The Romance for harmonica and orchestra was prompted by the extraordinary virtuosity of Mr. Larry Adler upon that humble instrument, the mouth-organ. It was first performed in New York in May 1952 and introduced to England at a Promenade Concert the same summer.

The Lark Ascending

The violin was Vaughan Williams's own instrument in youth. In the autobiographical pages which the composer contributed to Hubert Foss's book he relates that he began to learn theory at six and the violin at seven. He was then being taught the piano 'which I never could play' and the violin 'which was my musical salvation'. In due time, which in historic fact was 1914, he repaid what he owed to the instrument in the composition which is distinctively his own and like nothing else in music—Beethoven's two Romances for violin and orchestra are the nearest parallels—*The Lark Ascending*, described as a Romance for violin and orchestra, redolent of the English countryside and having a motto from Meredith. The lark is to England what the *Nachtigal* is to Germany; he is a blither bird with a less throaty tone; he is moreover a daylight not an evening bird. 'Romance' for Vaughan Williams is devoid of erotic connotation: the nearest he comes to the conventional connotation of that elastic word is when he calls *The Poisoned Kiss* a romantic extravaganza. The lark may be calling to his mate but it sounds more like *joi de vivre* on a spring morning with a slight haze in the air.

The Lark Ascending was written for Marie Hall, a violinist who had a pre-eminent position in the concert world during the first decade of the present century—she had actually had instruction from Elgar at one time but was ultimately a pupil of Ševčik in Prague. She introduced the piece which Vaughan Williams dedicated to her to London on 14 June 1921. It was subsequently played a good deal by Miss Jelly d'Aranyi. It is available in two scorings, one for double woodwind (including horns), one for single woodwind—the oboe is single in both versions. It was composed in 1914 but waited for more than the duration of the war for performance. The literary motto and the title come from Meredith's *Poems and Lyrics of the Joys of Earth*. The lines quoted are these:

He rises and begins to round
He drops the silver chain of sound

Of many links without a break
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.

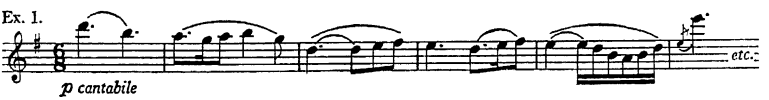
. . . . . .

For singing till his heaven fills
'Tis love of earth that he instils
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes.

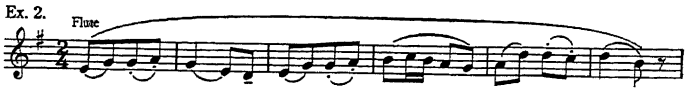
. . . . . .

Till lost on his aerial wings
In light, and then the fancy sings.

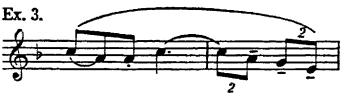
The beginning and the end of the work are descriptive and correspond programmatically to the first and third quotations from the poem. The onomatopoeia of bird song are not frowned on by the purists, and cuckoos and nightingales are common from Handel to Beethoven and beyond. This lark is a pentatonic bird with a propensity for leaving out the third and becoming tetratonic. His key note seems to be D but the orchestra sounds a hazy chord of the ninth on E which it holds for half of the unmeasured cadenza with which the work opens. After this introduction the orchestra resumes its chord of the ninth on E and adds some swaying harmonies that pivot on it while the soloist propounds the first main tune:

Ex. 1.

The woodwind has little to say but interjects snatches derived either from the tune Ex. 1 or its string accompaniment. The flute adds a chirrup or two and variants of Ex. 1 rise from the fields, while the lark goes off into the sky on another but shorter cadenza founded on the same four notes as before. The cadence is a drop of a third, the key still vague—it might be D Dorian, a contingent B minor or a suppressed G major (which has the support of the

key signature). The second tune and its harmony is equally indecisive—between C major and G major this time:



The woodwind deals for the most part with this idea, though not to the complete exclusion of the soloist or the violins.

In the next section the time has changed back to 6/8, but the solo music is very florid and the orchestral texture based on a new motif:

which sprouts many varied tails. This is the most animated section, as though someone had disturbed a whole bushful of birds. The lark's personal trills enclose this agitated bird-song. Calm is restored by the brief reappearance of the section based on Ex. 2. The main recapitulation however is based on Ex. 1 fully scored with some lovely luscious thirds in the woodwind—rather as though the nightingales or their English equivalents, the blackbirds, had joined in. The harmony ultimately comes to rest on its favourite chord on E and the lark on his aerial wings is lost in light. He reaches a D in altissimo and then drops again his minor third on to B. Yes, by now he has certainly reached G major.

Violin Concerto

The writing of consecutive fifths in students' harmony has always been regarded as the primary, if also the most common, offence against academic propriety, like false concords in Latin prose. The original title of the violin concerto as Concerto Accademico which is full of consecutive fifths was therefore regarded as cocking a snook at academic music, the word 'academic' carrying the usual but unwarrantedly pejorative sense.

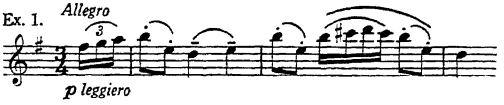
At this time in his career (1925) Vaughan Williams was in the full flush of writing what the academics called 'Back-to-Hucbald' harmony, and this concerto does suggest both organum and faburden exhumed from the Middle Ages and turned to modern usages, just as the medieval modes have been revived to make neo-modal music. It is however more probable that the title 'accademico' was adopted by the composer for the reason already suggested—in order to prevent any illusions on the part of the unwary that this was a concerto of the Horatius-keeping-the-bridge type, which was the kind exclusively written in the nineteenth century. Vaughan Williams calls his ballet a masque and his opera a morality for precisely the same reason—to save misunderstanding of what will be found inside the covers.

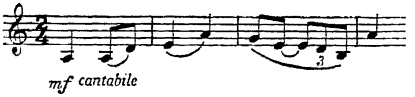
What is found inside the covers is neo-Bach—a sturdy 2/4 rhythm and figuration reminiscent of Bach's A minor Violin Concerto for the opening ritornello of the first movement, for the second an ostinato-like bass with an arabesque solo above it on the lines of the slow movement of Bach's E major Violin Concerto, and a finale like a jig complicated with cross-rhythms similar to the finale of the fifth Brandenburg Concerto. The accompaniment is limited to strings as in both of Bach's violin concertos.

The forms of the movements though not regular are clear enough. The first movement is not unitary with a recurrent dominating ritornello as in Bach but a rudimentary sonata form in which the second subject is recapitulated before the first. The slow movement is in a symmetrical ternary form. The finale is founded on the old binary type of dance form, with the first part marked with an old-fashioned double-bar repeat. Cadenzas occur in all movements, those in the first and last being marked to be played in strict time although the orchestra stands still on a held note and bar lines disappear, those in the slow movement on the other hand being marked 'senza misura' while the orchestra is either silent or stationary.

The narrative therefore of what happens is this. In the first movement soloist and orchestra start off on what looks like a Bach ritornello in which there are three constituent ideas, two of

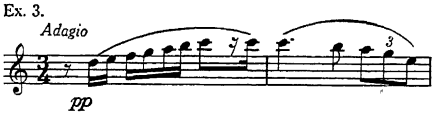
which make play with repeated notes. The key is D minor. After this statement comes the first cadenza followed by a reduced counter-statement of the first subject. The key changes to E minor and the solo gives out a tune

Ex. 1.

which is promptly picked up by the viola while the soloist reverts to the repeated note figure of the first subject. Ex. 1 is repeated by the first violins, to which the soloist offers a balancing phrase in double stops. A double bar marks the end of the exposition and the beginning of a development section in which, as in Bach, the constituents of the first subject appear, though there is a self-contained episode based on

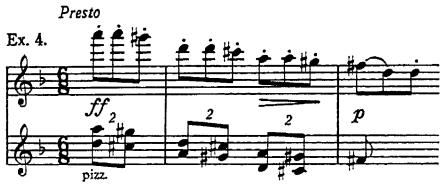
Ex. 2.

which is repeated several times over. There are two-bar incursions from the first subject, which behaves like a ritornello. This section of the movement ends with a cadenza based on a gapped scale. At the recapitulation the key returns firmly to D minor and the second subject, Ex. 2, is taken, double stops and all, before the first subject asserts itself. There is a short presto coda.

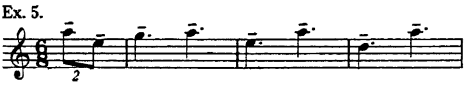
If the consecutives have been the fifths of ancient organum in the first movement they have now advanced a century or two to faburden and appear in thirds or chords of the sixth. The key is G minor and the cello leads off with a solo accompanied by these reiterated chords, which form the kind of one-bar ostinato found in Bach's slow movements. The soloist enters belatedly with an arabesque. The key changes to G major (though the signature is C) and the same scheme of things is worked out in the new tonality with the reiterated chords now become triads. The total is the conventional sixteen bars with the interpolation of an

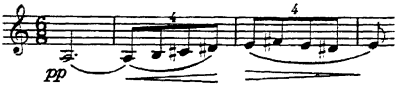
unconventional cadenza of one bar 'senza misura'. The middle section gives the soloist a tune

Ex. 3.

which is quite capable of flowering into more arabesques when a cello solo takes it over. The figuration has now changed to six insistent quavers to the bar which before long perform the extraordinary manœuvre of descending through a whole-tone scale from A to A. A climax is precipitated thereby which, as it dies away, turns back to G minor and a kind of recapitulation, in which however it is Ex. 3, the second subject again, that is repeated first. The first subject somewhat abbreviated has the last word after a second cadenza.

The third movement begins, as it means to go on, in a cross-rhythm:

Ex. 4.

The theme is derived, in part at least, from *Hugh the Drover*—or so the composer says in a footnote, but it is not easy to discover the whereabouts of the quotation in the opera. The dropping intervals are like the opening bars of the overture and the 6/8 rhythm is like the hubbub before and during the boxing match, but the acknowledgement seems an excess of scruple. The second theme is in the Aeolian mode and in trochaic metre with a balancing phrase of a broader nature:

Ex. 5.

The two ideas are shared between soloist and orchestra and worked together. Then comes a double bar marking a repeat. At the second time the soloist has a theme derived from the triplets of Ex. 4, against which the orchestra launches in imitational entries another theme in cross-rhythm:

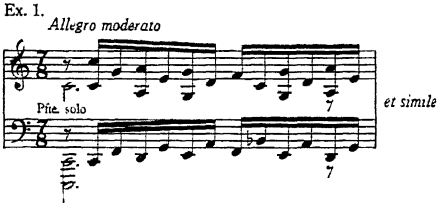
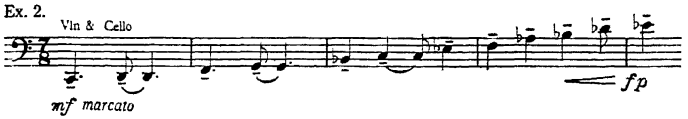
Ex. 6.

This is new matter, but for the continuation of this binary movement (the second part is not repeated) the material of the first part is recalled, first Ex. 5 and its concomitant and then Ex. 4. With a high trill on the solo instrument comes a midway cadenza, unaccompanied but in strict time, triplets in moto perpetuo fashion. When the orchestra obtrudes it does so in the trochaic tune. Other bits of tune are recalled too, as though to sum the whole concerto up, but in the end the soloist is left supported only by a pedal D to play another cadenza *sul tasto* in strict time but finally in an augmentation that brings the music to a quiet standstill.

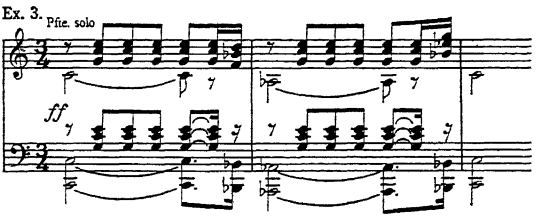
Piano Concerto

The Piano Concerto is the only one of the works in this group, in which solo instruments are combined with orchestra, that can be described as a major work. Foss classes it with the symphonies and when I first wrote about it in my former 'Pilgrim' booklet I prefaced my analysis with a short essay on mysticism in music, because I discerned in this concerto affinities with late Beethoven and saw in it an example of the composer's probe of ultimate reality. It is prophetic in the way the symphonies are prophetic. Since then the composer himself has defined the object of art as 'to stretch out to the ultimate realities through the medium of beauty'. This concerto, though smaller in scale than the symphonies, seem to be engaged in precisely that metaphysical

quest, as Beethoven also was searching in the sonatas and quartets of the third period. The affinity with Beethoven is technical as well as spiritual, in that the concluding fugue is more like Beethoven's than Bach's fugues, and the way in which the various sections of the last two movements grow out of each other has some resemblance to the organic structure of the later quartets.

In externals, however, notably in its pianism, the concerto is not descended from Beethoven. The opening Toccata is a reversion to a more primitive form than Beethoven ever used in a symphonic work. There is not much passage-work; the arpeggio beloved of the romantics, Schumann, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky, is sparingly used. But the pianoforte can do other things besides those rippling cascades, those brilliant staccato octaves, those double thirds and sixths, those imitation cantabile melodies which were exploited so well by the nineteenth century. It can play solid chords, especially it can play fourths and fifths and triads; it can give an edge to the harmonic and orchestral bass such as nothing else can (cf. its use in *Benedicite* and in *Sinfonia Antartica*); it can reiterate single notes or sequences or chords (see Exx. 1 and 3 below); it can hammer out progressions with alternate hands (this device romantics certainly did employ); it can, in fact, abandon its cursive style altogether and take to something more tingling and percussive. This is the twentieth-century style of pianoforte writing, and can be found in many modern works for pianoforte. Vaughan Williams expresses his own idiom in it, and in this, to superficial appearance, most unpianistic concerto, which nevertheless demands the element of virtuosity essential to any concerto, he has in his own terms seemed to review the whole history of pianism. In the Toccata he looks back (*mutatis mutandis* of course) to the jangle of the harpsichord; in the Romanza he reverts to something like the melody and passage-work of the romantics; and in the Finale he opens out the dynamic possibilities of the pianoforte. But the work as a whole looks forward and not backwards, and is addressed to us now living in the language of today. It is scored for normal full orchestra without harp and with an optional organ part.

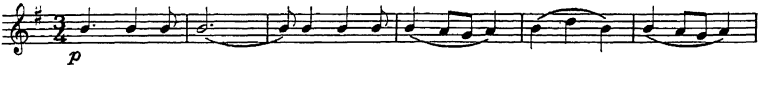
Consider it now in technical detail. The Toccata ('allegro moderato') opens with a crashing tonic pedal in which the pianoforte joins while immediately starting its toccata-like figure:

The pulse, be it noted, is in septuple time. The key professes to be C major, and the B flat in the first bar is only an incidental result of the pattern of perfect fourths, but it is to be a flat kind of C major all the same. After two bars in which strong dominant harmony is spelled out over the tonic pedal (as in Beethoven), a mounting figure uses different rungs of the ladder:

But stability is regained and the pianoforte changes its figure:



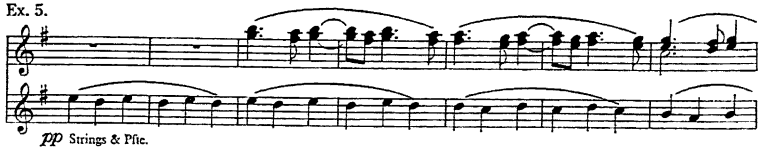
The pace becomes poco animato, and the implications of what has now been stated begin to spread themselves out in variously subdivided figures, and the key to perform sundry balancing feats, leaning over to D major and back to A flat. Then as you were—a more elaborate restatement of all this. Ex. 3, however, is now more acute—chords of E major over a racy C major bass. After

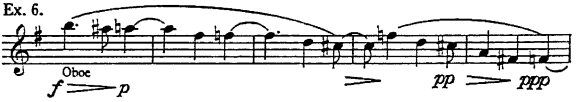
this second statement comes a development section in which the organization of the 7/8 bar oscillates from 4 + 3 to 3 + 4 and back again, and in which there is more movement all over the orchestra, though it is to be noted that it is all movement *with* the pianoforte and not counter-movement—there is hardly a line of counterpoint in the whole toccata. At the climax the orchestra gives up, the tempo broadens to largamente, and the pianoforte begins Ex. 1 again by itself, only expanded on to four staves to cover a greater range of pianoforte tone and impact. Impact is important throughout the concerto. The older writers who gave their soloists broken chords and scale and arpeggio passages were seeking a cursive effect: the momentum of this concerto is increased by the incessant impact of scores of hammers on a hundred wires. The orchestra is silent only for a few bars, and rounds off the movement on mixed tonic and dominant harmony in which the dominant is now the stronger element, the final chord being rooted not on C but on D.

A cadenza 'senza misura', a single-line ripple of notes which deliberately spells instability of key, leads into the second movement, Romanza (lento). The signature now contains one sharp, and a B natural is reiterated over the ripple, which has now descended to the bass but is still uncertain whether to be C major, C mixolydian, F major, D flat major, A flat minor, or whatever, each by turns and nothing long—but always at variance with the right hand, which by now has evolved its single note into a melody:

Ex. 4.

When the flute takes up this tune the pianoforte continues the rippling accompaniment and the writing is here more like conventionally pianistic writing. But the orchestra begins to harmonize the tune (Ex. 4)—in fifths and parallel triads, of course, such as come naturally to Vaughan Williams—and the mood becomes like that which is familiar to us in *Job*. With the opening of the middle section ('poco più mosso') this mood of

sublime contemplation emerges fully from the preceding music into:

Ex. 5.

The simple beauty of this heavenly strain can be no stumbling block to any listener, however harshly some of the more unrelenting discords of the first movement and chromatic clashes of the last fall upon his ear. The pianoforte, it may be noted, now performs another function not common in concertos, though found in Beethoven: the left hand descends to the bass and the two are kept wide apart, lining in with bright clear tone like a celesta's the containing outlines of the picture, giving it depth and transparency in the French manner, and playing plain two-part counterpoint bare of all harmonic emphasis. The first part returns with the flute tune (Ex. 4), now given to the oboe, while the accompanying harmony, although thicker in actual notes, is still tenuous in effect, owing to height in pitch and other devices. At the end the woodwind are still playing counter-subjects as solos, when among them, as the last murmur of strings and pianoforte dies away, the oboe lights as though by accident upon

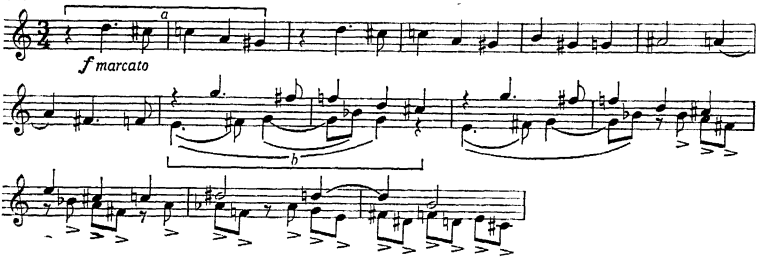
Ex. 6.

From this germ the whole of the Finale is to come.

Although the concerto is written in three well-defined movements, each is linked to the next, and since the last of them is in two sections—a Fugue and a Finale alla Tedesca, with appropriate breaks for cadenzas—it easily happens that at a first hearing the ear may momentarily lose its sense of direction before the end is reached. But it is really quite simple, since its ground plan is clearly drawn. The oboe and viola, playing at the end of the Romanza, have their little snatch of chromatic tune (Ex. 6) taken

out of their mouths by an uncouth interruption of trombones playing a curt version of the same chromatic descending figure. Strings and wood immediately take up this challenge—first in a little phrase suggestive of the counter-subject (Ex. 7 *b*) to come, and finally in a wild upwards rush.

Subject and counter-subject are announced by the pianoforte against a high D sustained tremolando by the violins for twenty-one bars. It might be described as an inverted dominant pedal, for the key of this movement, though very elusive, is more G than C. Its first full cadence ends on an emphatic G, as does the final cadence at the end of the work—the last page even bears the signature of one sharp, but it seems more appropriate to speak of this chromatic movement as being 'based on G' rather than as 'in the key of G'. We may perhaps go so far as to say that the tonic is G, and leave it at that. The end, when it comes, gains something in emphasis from the wrench with which the movement breaks off on G instead of proceeding in orthodox manner to a full re-establishment of C major—the professed key of the concerto. But key is not important in this Finale.

Now for the subject and counter-subject:

Ex. 7.

When every section of the orchestra has had its say about the subject, it is inverted and submitted to a process of development, descending and ascending forms being worked together. The ascending form finally leads to an enormous pedal point on D, the organ being requisitioned to provide foundation-tone for a tremendous stretto. This summing-up of the fugue breaks off to allow the pianist a huge chordal cadenza, which in its turn leads

into the Finale proper—a waltz built on the fugue subject. The full orchestra opens the ball; the second strain is introduced by the pianoforte solo, and is made out of (*b*) of Ex. 7, permanent counter-theme in ordinary to the subject, which has already appeared in the preface and in the fugue immediately after the exposition. The two themes (*a*) and (*b*) are now worked together by pianoforte and orchestra in combination. The pianist next enunciates as a third strain the subject (*a*) augmented into a cantabile version of itself, but again the orchestra soon joins in, and the whole thing begins to expand. After the climax the pianoforte has another cadenza, which includes reference to the first two movements and gathers the whole work together into a kind of summary. A quotation from Bax's Third Symphony stood in the score at the end of the cadenza, but as the reference seemed to have a personal rather than a musical significance, it was removed after the first performance. Ten bars of orchestral ritornello serve to punctuate the concerto with its final full stop.

The soloist to whom the Piano Concerto was dedicated, and by whom it was first played at a B.B.C. concert on 1 February 1933, was Miss Harriet Cohen. Rearrangement of the solo part for two pianos has increased its effectiveness. For the impact which is a peculiar feature of the Toccata is increased—one must not say doubled for Weber's law in psychology is a law of diminishing returns in aesthetics. The four staves required at its climax suggest a doubling of the keyboards, while in the Finale the complex texture can be more advantageously exploited by four than by two hands.

The main differences between the two versions may be summarized thus.

Toccata. The martellato passage Ex. 1 is played with doubled octaves in the two-piano version thus doubling the impact. The bass line of Ex. 3 is reinforced with an additional octave. Arpeggio figures are spread out. The repeated chords of Ex. 3 are, when restated in E major, intensified by the extra piano adding a chordal shake. At the beginning of the development section the difficult leap from big chord to the toccata passage is saved by a division of labour between the two pianists. Similarly the passage

on four staves is more effectively played by four hands than two. The cadenza is reserved for one pianist only.

Romanza. The arpeggios are consigned to one piano and are reinforced by a sustained chord in the bass of the other piano which plays the melody. In the middle section when Ex. 5 is played there is naturally nothing for the second piano to do and it remains silent until in the interests of abstract justice it undertakes the balancing section in D major at 21. At 22 the first piano resumes but before 23 is reached the second piano has undertaken the chords which it plays in octaves, leaving the arpeggios to number 1. At 24 where the orchestra has a recapitulation of Ex. 4 the division of labour makes a more effective layout of the arpeggio of E possible. What in the one-piano version is an Alberti bass becomes in the two-piano version a true arpeggio made more piquant by the addition of the supertonic to the tonic chord. The consecutive fourths are left for the other piano to deal with. The conversion of the Alberti bass to arpeggio continues to the end and the texture is correspondingly fortified by some stuffing in the middle which is impossible while one soloist has to grapple with the extremes of the keyboard.

Fugue. Octave doublings are made easier by four hands and extra doublings made possible. Orchestral statement of the subject can also be given an edge by doublings on the second piano. In the martellato episode heavy chords are thrown in to give extra weight and at the inversion of the subject both pianos launch it with extra force. In the cadenza the use of both pianos enables the big chords to be doubled and widely spaced over the whole range, and in the A major passage at the end there is a good deal of extra figuration inserted which seems to inflate the volume of piano tone for the crescendo which leads into the

Finale alla Tedesca. Here the solo work is divided antiphonally, or extra figuration provided; martellato passages are doubled at the octave, and additional bass provided. But the biggest change in the whole of the revised version is the provision of a new solo for the two pianos between 49 and 50 in the old score. The cadenza which shortly follows and was in the old score set out on four staves now appears on six, and the great chordal passages can

be executed with less strain. The orchestral ritornello is removed and the work ends swiftly with full chords from both pianos and a light string accompaniment.

Suite for Viola

The exceptional quality of Mr. Lionel Tertis's viola playing has been a source of inspiration to more than one modern English composer. Mühlfeld's clarinet drew from Brahms four great works for that instrument. Tertis's viola, if it has not elicited anything so outstandingly great as the Clarinet Quintet, has prompted an even larger number of works from several composers, among whom Vaughan Williams takes his place with the suite which he dedicates to Tertis. It was written for a medium-sized orchestra—two each of all the wind except the oboe, no heavy brass, but harp, celesta, and percussion—but is also playable with the composer's own piano arrangement. It was first performed with orchestra under Malcolm Sargent at the Courtauld-Sargent Concert of 12 and 13 November 1934. It was published in the piano version in the summer of 1936.

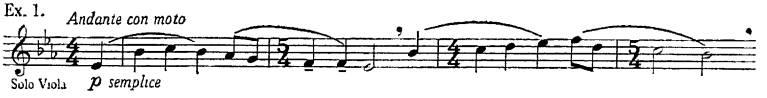
The suite consists of eight short pieces, taking together twenty-five minutes in performance, which are organized into a unity not by identity of key, nor by traditional order—for they are not all in dance forms—but by arrangement into three groups. In performance the listener is not actively aware of any special significance in the arrangement or of any particular cohesion within the groups. But the existence of such a ground plan undoubtedly contributes to the feeling of obvious rightness and natural sequence of which the listener is very positively aware.

Group I

Group I consists of a Prelude in C, a Carol in E flat, and a Christmas Dance in G, and its unity is emotional—the predominance of the Christmas spirit. The Prelude, superficially recalling Bach's First from the Forty-Eight and Debussy's *Dr. Gradus ad Parnassum*, is not so cool and formal an affair as either.

It breaks into pastoral rhythm in the middle section, which is in warm A major tonality, and the markings direct increasing animation throughout. It establishes for the rest of the suite a preoccupation with rhythmic ingenuities and varieties. Starting with arpeggios on the solo viola over a comfortable tonic pedal on C, a counter-tune on the violas of the orchestra makes a simple statement. A certain amount of interweaving follows with the addition of a decorative semiquaver figure, before the new pastoral idea is introduced. The viola canters in 9/8 against the plain 3/4 of the accompaniment and vice versa—the alternation and crossing of rhythms has begun. After the best ternary models, the Prelude reverts to C major and simplicity. A coda still in C reasserts the pastoral idea, while the viola sees that the arpeggios are not forgotten.

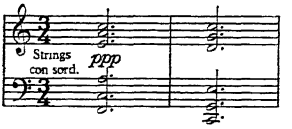
The Carol begins

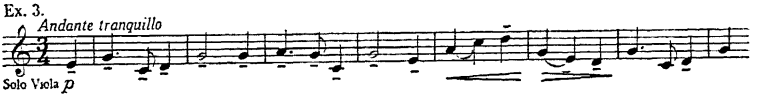
Ex. 1.

This tune, nine bars long, is simply though affectionately harmonized. At the end of the verse it is given to the strings while the viola plays a quaver counterpoint to it, all pianissimo. Verse 3 is more robust and is a variation, not a repetition, of the original melody. Verse 4 is a free canon between the flute and the solo instrument at a bar's distance. Three bars of scales in contrary and gently discordant motion close the angelic song without bringing it to earth.

The Christmas Dance is earthy enough, and rightly. A few bare fifths give the fiddler his tuning, and he draws a few chords across the strings. The rhythm is an alternating 3/4 and 6/8. This, together with another alternation derived from the fiddler's fifths, gives the dance its animation and character. There is a snatch of melody like a peal of bells announced and pursued by the viola, which in the middle section develops into another carol, but the dance ends with a stamping of feet and the violist sawing chords like mad.

Group II

The second group consists of two pieces only, a Ballad in C major and a Moto Perpetuo in C minor. The kind of C major employed by Vaughan Williams is determined harmonically thus:

Ex. 2.

These are the actual opening bars before the entry of the soloist, but this kind of harmony is to be found in one form or another as the basis of many of the accompaniments to folk-songs and to the lyrics in *Sir John in Love* and *The Poisoned Kiss*. The tune of this ballad, the most impassioned movement in the suite, is a characteristic 'gapped' tune,

Ex. 3.

and from the sequence of C D G A, with the occasional amplification of an E, the last section and its cadenza-like rhapsody for the soloist are built.

Another gapped figure, which is introduced as an accompaniment, is promoted in the middle section to the task of carrying on the main narrative. Here it is subjected to the rhythmic alternation of 6/8 and 3/4 which was so conspicuous a feature of Group I. This middle section is marked 'allegro non troppo' (qualified by a 'tranquillo' in brackets) but the rest of the movement is slow and there is ample space in the final section for the soloist's rhapsody.

The loose wrist of a fiddler's bow arm is the perfect instrument for that particular form of hurry and bustle called the Moto Perpetuo. But the viola is not so nimble a runner as the violin, and there is something rather hoarse about its voice when it has to speak quickly. So that this movement has in it an element of the grotesque. This ungainly effect is heightened by the irregular fall

of the accents—again this alternation between compound double and simple triple time—both in the solo part and more wilfully in the accompaniment. It hurries along right enough, however, helped now by a snatch of tune on the flute that for a fraction of a second makes one think of the Irish melody 'Avenging and Bright', now by a strong staccato bass, now by chords falling regularly every two beats across the bar accents of triple measure (as in the famous passages in Brahms's *Schicksalslied*). The solo part sways across the strings, then takes to double stopping and chords, then back to simple semiquavers unaccompanied to work it up all over again. The soloist does not pause for a semiquaver throughout, nor does he give any note that he plays either more or less than one semiquaver's value; and he stops abruptly fortissimo without any broadening at the end of an animando passage.

The two pieces of the centre group are thus well contrasted in character and speed and are united by a common tonic of C.

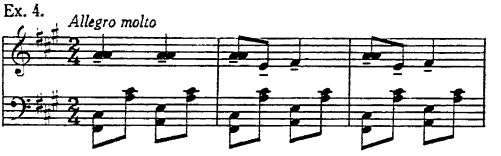
Group III

The third group has the unity of the old-fashioned suite in that it is a sequence of dance tunes. Allemandes and minuets, however, do not appear in it. Musette, which in the older writers sometimes appeared as a trio to a minuet, has here an independent status. Its drone bass is not rigidly maintained, but a tonic pedal of E flat is fairly persistent, varied by a move to the dominant or to another key. There is a change to G major ('poco animato'), to form a middle section, but the lullabyish character of the piece is not disturbed thereby.

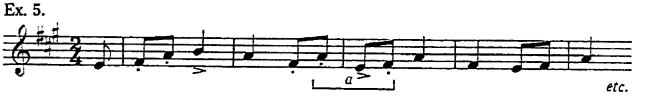
The second dance is entitled 'Polka Mélancolique', which is something of an oxymoron. However, composers have taken over simple dance forms before now and worked their will on them with profit to the art of music. The contradiction in the title is borne out in the dance, which is rather clod-hopping for a polka and too sophisticated for simple-minded practitioners of that gay dance. The feeling of the music is nearer to twentieth-century jazz than to the prancings of the Victorian ball-room, and there is in the 'poco più mosso' middle section a definite use made of modern syncopation. So that *mélancolique* means 'sentimental', or

in the case of the solo instrument 'emotionally excited', since the viola lets itself go towards the end in a series of cadenza passages. The old antithesis of three against two persists, and there are some sharp contrasts of key. The main tonality is D, but it drops into B flat minor, then picks itself up by some brusque transitions into C sharp minor, back to D minor then on again to F sharp major and minor in rapid succession, then after some sliding chromatics which make a momentary recovery into F sharp, it reaches D major and so home to D minor. Which is indeed all very *mélancolique* for a polka.

The Galop ('allegro molto') is in F sharp minor. It starts off pitter-patter, two in a bar with the viola playing A on its open and its stopped strings:

Ex. 4.

But even here the old antagonism of the triplets reasserts itself and there is a long middle section given over to unequivocal 6/8 time. Finally, however, the duple principle prevails and the last pages are no less unequivocally duple without admixture of any cross current. The Galop speeds along on this silly, charming tune

Ex. 5.



and stops with a lather of violins and a crisp unison statement of *a* in augmentation cut off sharp with a snap on the side-drum.

The scoring of this suite contains points of interest and contributes a good deal to its beauty and its musical value. Just as it is easy in discussion to emphasize form against matter or vice versa while still trying to remember that each conditions the other and both are inseparable, so composers seem to invite attention to a similar antithesis between the colouring and the substance of their music. The old fallacy that Brahms could not score, based on the

fact that what is prominent in his symphonies is the substance of his thought rather than the presentation of it in brilliant colours, is now exploded and people realize that his scoring is appropriate to the substance of his composition. Yet the fallacy contained this much truth: that emphasis may be laid in varying degrees upon the colour-saturation of any particular work. Respighi's tone-poems, for instance, from this point of view seem to contain more orchestration than composition—the emphasis is laid on the colour-values to the partial overshadowing of the form and the matter. In general, one does not think of Vaughan Williams as a colourist, but this suite, like that other suite for viola *Flos Campi*, presents an instance of a certain preoccupation with colour. At any rate the scoring is varied from number to number, and the general aim appears to be to achieve a series of water-colours in addition to making a suite and providing the soloist with a legitimate scope for virtuosity.

In the first place, there is an unusual delicacy and restraint in the use of the wind instruments. In the Prelude, one flute, one clarinet, and one bassoon are used, and incidentally no violins. In the Carol two flutes and two clarinets are the only instruments employed besides the strings. In the Christmas Dance there is more body: an oboe, two bassoons, two horns, and two trumpets are involved, and a similar complement complete with percussion is required for the final Galop. Brass is used also in the Polka. Extensive calls are made on the harp: for picking out a tune in the Prelude, for providing a background in the Musette, and, more remarkably, for rhythmic emphasis in the Moto Perpetuo. Two horns and two trumpets are the only brass employed, only one oboe is required throughout, the percussion players are not overworked, and the celesta makes a pretty spot of colour in the Musette.

It will be apparent from this suite, from *Flos Campi* and from the second string quartet that the tone of the viola makes a special and inspiring appeal to Vaughan Williams. Other instances of this predilection will be found through his whole output, as the pages of this book show. A closer scrutiny of the scores is still more revealing of this element in his personal style.

Oboe Concerto

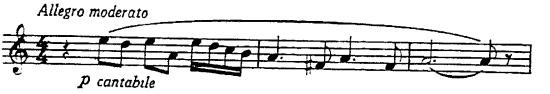
Last of the works for solo instrument and orchestra is the Oboe Concerto of 1944, a deliberately small work, more interesting for its craftsmanship than for its meaning, message, or inspiration. It was prompted by the superb playing of Leon Goossens, to whom it is dedicated and by whom it was first performed at Liverpool on 30 September 1944. It is thus one more of the products of the instrumental virtuosity that has marked the English musical renaissance, though that movement is normally thought of as a matter of composition alone. Marie Hall may have inspired *The Lark Ascending*, Lionel Tertis certainly inspired the Viola Suite as well as numerous works by other composers, and Mr. Goossens has had his tale of tribute paid by composers to executants—after all, composers depend on the executants for a hearing.

The oboe is, apart from its orchestral associates, an instrument of marked limitations. Limitations are the artist's opportunity, but the ear is soon tired by so distinctive and keen-edged a tone. The oboe can play three parts, the pastoral, the chattering, and the etching. In this small concerto Vaughan Williams forces on it one more—acrobatic agility in the presto Finale.

This little concerto is hardly more of a real concerto than is the Suite for Viola, and it does not flirt with the eighteenth century as the Violin Concerto does, unless the provision of a Musette as trio for the Minuet be regarded as a loan from the Arcadian Academies or an allusion to Watteau's shepherdesses of an even earlier period. The work is in fact slight and is scored only for strings. Its three movements are a Rondo Pastorale, a middle movement consisting of the aforementioned dances, Minuet and Musette, and a final Scherzo. Formally all are simple though not regular; they are not organic but sectional in internal economy, but they seem to drive towards a special section of greater import near the end. It is not so much that the end is in the beginning as that the end justifies the apparently casual beginning—in the case

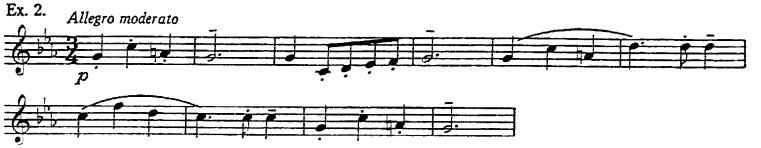
of the first movement the goal is an elaborate cadenza, in the second no more than a broader statement of the tune over a wider range, but in the Finale it is an unexpected slow section, almost like one of the composer's favourite epilogues on a minute scale. The comparative monotony of the medium is made to yield a maximum of variety in harmonic inflexion, in melodic variation, and in rhythmic intricacy.

The rondo tune of the first movement begins

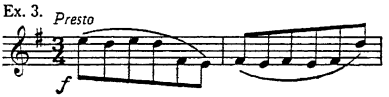
Ex. 1.

The key is A minor, and it is the key scheme as much as thematic material that makes the movement a simple but unorthodox rondo, of which the formula is ABABA. Paragraph A contains four ideas thus disposed: (*a*) Ex. 1, (*b*) a cadenza which dissolving into trills picks up an accompaniment, (*c*) the real counterpoise to Ex. 1, a section ten bars long in G major, (*d*) recapitulation of the first section with the solo part varied by triplets. Paragraph B is in two sections, the first (*e*) in A major, the second (*f*) in C minor, as though the neutrality of A minor was to be preserved by the mutual cancellation of three sharps and three flats. The soloist's material in (*e*) is not unlike a development of Ex. 1, but in (*f*) it goes in for semiquavers and staccato semiquavers at that—chattering in fact. A in due course returns in A minor, and as usual in such cases its appearance is abbreviated. But it should be observed that whereas in a classical rondo this section would be an orchestral ritornello, in this modern concerto the soloist, who begins in the second bar, has no intermission, save a bar or two at a time, throughout the movement. After A, B returns in the same keys as before, A major and C minor. When A returns for the third and last time the solo part becomes so florid that the orchestra has to dwell on held chords and wait for it from time to time. Just before the end there is an argument, like that in Brahms's Third Symphony over the inflexion of the third in F major, whether in a chord of A minor the E ought not really to

be flat rather than natural. A minor, the argument seems to be, is inclined to sharpness—there have in fact been a number of F sharps in the cadenzas—so that to ensure that it is really and finally neutral between flats and sharps the E should be flattened. Ultimately the claim is disallowed and the tonic chord is very firm with the soloist holding a long E natural. For those who like algebra the form of the movement can be expressed in the formula: A(a + b + c + d)B(e + f)A(a)B(e + f)A(a + c).

The Minuet observes the customary formalities of structure but is wayward in its key scheme. Its main theme is pseudo-classical:

Ex. 2. *Allegro moderato*

It runs to seventeen bars for the soloist and twenty-one for the orchestra; then there is a double bar but no repeat mark. The balancing phrase is again a neat cancellation of sharp and flat, E minor against D minor. In the best orthodox style this section is a little longer—twenty-eight bars. The essence of a Musette is its drone. The drone, played, appropriately enough, by the oboe, lasts three bars and a beat and then breaks out into an ornamental cadence at each occurrence. The key is C major fluttering in these cadences into C minor, with a repetition a tone higher in D and again in G. Before the resumption of the Minuet the orchestra repeats the C major-minor section. There is no further repeat nor double bar.

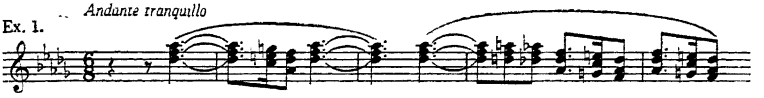
The Finale begins in E minor and ends in G major (after an A minor opening of the work!). Each section is in a different key, or at any rate bears a different signature, for the tonality is unstable. Melodic ideas are picked up and dropped almost as in an Elizabethan fantasia or a German quodlibet, but the texture is not, as in those forms, contrapuntal but in simple harmony. Some of these ideas recur, notably the first:

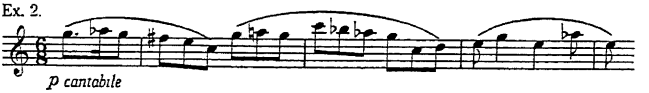
Ex. 3. *Presto*

The movement can thus be analysed (roughly) as a scherzo with two trios, of which the first is a waltz and the second is slower and is marked by solid chords from the orchestra. To all this is appended a coda in two parts, the first of which is the destination of the whole work and the second a resumption of Ex. 3 by the oboe unaccompanied until the last few bars. The slow section is very striking and imparts to the concerto as a whole, in its soaring melody and diatonic harmony and cross-rhythm, something of the feeling of the Fifth Symphony, which is its nearest contemporary in composition. Here is once more the English landscape with the thoughts and visions which it always elicits from the composer. The pastoral pipe has done its work.

Romance for Harmonica

Like *The Lark Ascending* for Marie Hall, the Viola Suite for Lionel Tertis and the Oboe Concerto for Leon Goossens, the Romance for harmonica was composed primarily with an eminent executant in mind—Larry Adler, whose combination of technical skill and musical feeling enables him to do things with his humble mouth-organ which the ear when it hears them still cannot believe possible. Subtlety of phrasing, variety of tone colour, attack, glissando, dynamic gradation, which one expects from more complex instruments, are all possible in addition to the peculiar 'double-stopping', in which one can include three-part chords, that is characteristic of this small portable organ—for organ, reed-organ, is what it basically is. And of course melody, which the player produces by covering some of the wind-holes with his tongue. Hearing what Adler could do with his 'harmonica', as we must for politeness' sake call it, and invited by him to write for it, Vaughan Williams complied with the request and produced this Romance in D flat for harmonica, string orchestra, and piano in 1951, while the *Sinfonia Antartica* was being completed. Its first performance was in New York. In this country it landed at Liverpool and made its London début at a Henry Wood Promenade Concert on 6 September 1952.

The form of the work is clear and concise—a binary form in which two subjects are fully stated and a quasi-development constitutes a sort of recapitulation. There is an accompanied cadenza between the two parts and there is a coda. The two subjects of the exposition are distinguishable by their rhythm and their tonality, as well as by the manner of their solo writing. The first subject is in D flat and 6/8 with consecutive 6/3 chords for the solo. The second subject is in C major and 9/8 with florid arabesque monodic writing for the harmonica. A few bars of the opening solo may be quoted not only to state the theme but to show how one writes for harmonica.

Ex. 1.

The second subject has a strong upward leap of a seventh to start it off, quaver motion becomes more florid until what began as melody finds itself a cadenza. The cadenza however is eventful, in that the orchestra breaks in and at one point actually silences the soloist, who has reverted to chord playing. The second part is marked 'allegro moderato'. The piano sustains the main burden of accompaniment with arpeggios. There is a counter-melody from the violins, over which the solo plays

Ex. 2.

which subsequently develops into a real cantabile tune upon which the violins can fasten first in imitation and then in unison. This is not quite the same as the tune of the second subject, it is rather a clarification of it. The key is C major, but the cantabile tune acts as a bridge back to D flat, in which key the first subject appears shorn of its triple stopping and considerably reduced in size, unless one counts the coda, which is founded on the same material, as part of a recapitulated first subject. The orchestral writing thins out in this last section, thus giving the soloist a

short cadenza, none other than Ex. 1. The piano comes down on a tonic chord with an effect of finality. The ground plan of the movement, which is however rhapsodical and not architectural in character, is thus ABCB′A′A, in which C is the middle cadenza and A and B stand for first subject in D flat and second subject in C.

The orchestral layout is for doubled strings, except for double-bass which is in one part, making nine parts in all. It may be that this gives too thick a texture as background for so thin-toned an instrument as the mouth-organ, which is easily swallowed by it unless there is amplification of the solo by microphone—as there often is when this instrument is played. The piano has an important function in that it comes in with decisive effect on the first and last chords and at the climax of the middle cadenza. It also gives definition to the figuration of minor parts, occasionally undertakes the real work of accompanying by breaking into arpeggios, and in general holds the texture together.

Choral Music

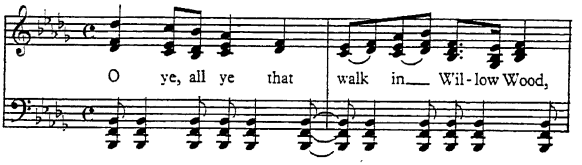
Introduction

It is surprising in a composer who, however radical in his technique, has always sought inspiration in tradition and has gone out of his way to identify himself with many specifically English traditions, that Vaughan Williams has never written a full-length Biblical oratorio, nor even the equivalent of *The Dream of Gerontius*. *Sancta Civitas* comes nearest to the main English choral tradition and is the only work actually called an oratorio on its title-page. But its text comes not from the Old Testament but from the Book of Revelation and it is prefaced with a quotation from Plato. Canticles and Psalms and three Choral Hymns represent his sacred music in the terminological sense. His most substantial choral work is the Sea Symphony, which is discussed not here but in the context of his other symphonies because in their numbering it occupies the first place.

Toward the Unknown Region

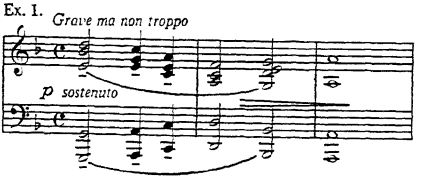
The work which first drew attention to him as a composer with a future was the Whitmanesque cantata *Toward the Unknown Region*, which was composed about 1905 and first performed at the Leeds Festival of 1907. Hitherto he had been known as a song writer. The first volume of *Songs of Travel* which is roughly contemporary with this first cantata quickly gained a wide currency and made his name familiar. And *Willow Wood*, which employs a female chorus and an orchestral accompaniment, is essentially a solo cantata for baritone. This now unknown work was composed in 1903 and shows the composer still in the toils of a romantic idiom that now seems totally uncharacteristic and from which he made frantic and successful efforts to escape. The poem is by D. G.

Rossetti, who exercised a certain spell over Vaugham Williams in his youth sufficient to produce the *House of Life* song-cycle, which contains one really great song, 'Silent Noon'. In that song can be heard an individual voice speaking the familiar language of romanticism. In *Willow Wood* one has to listen very hard to catch the individual voice, though in such a passage as this, there is behind all the Brahmsian hollow triads and conventional agitation of the rhythm in the bass something that one heard in 'Whither shall I wander', the earliest of the Stevenson songs, and something audible too in 'Silent Noon'. But *Willow Wood* was only a

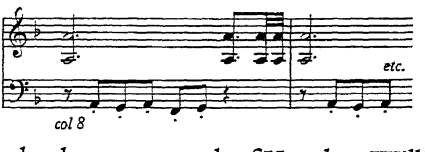
Ex. A

stepping-stone to more individual and higher things. There must be scores of such cantatas written in the 'nineties from which there is not enough essential Vaughan Williams in *Willow Wood* to distinguish it. But the impression made by *Toward the Unknown Region* was of something new: Hubert Foss quotes Harry Plunket Greene's description of the way it struck the Leeds audience—'new in outlook, new in its working out and enthralling in its beautiful interpretation of the words'. In retrospect it seems more difficult to justify the middle one of those three specifications than the other two. It is easy to feel the newness nearly half a century later because the directness, the sincerity, the impact of personality comes straight at the listener out of the opening fanfare and never thereafter flags or is dimmed as the interpretation of the words is expanded.

But 'new in working out'? The choral writing is mainly homophonic and, though one may feel the influence of Parry in the approach to the text, the part-writing has not Parry's virtuosity. The chromaticism of the orchestral writing is derived directly from the romantic tradition of the nineteenth century. Chromaticism in later Vaughan Williams generally depicts evil, or fear, or at any rate obliquity, but here it is positive, warm, and decora-

tive, even though compared with Strauss and Elgar it is mild in its colours and quite in keeping with the homespun texture. Other conventional features are reiterated triplets for climax, off-beat inner parts in purely accompanimental passages, harp arpeggios. However, there is something new in these opening bars:

Ex. 1.

The signature suggests D minor, the cadence A minor, because three bars later a fanfare on A and a bass pivoting on A reinforces the tonality of A. The tonality is in fact A because the music is in the Lydian mode—A to A with a flattened supertonic (B flat) gives one the Lydian mode from which the folk-song 'Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John' derives its distinctive character. Here then is an early sign of folk-song influence.

The choral writing, basically in four parts, shows a constant tendency to divide into five or six, and the spacing of the minim chords at the words 'are in that land' is noteworthy because it is this registration of voices rather than contrapuntal part-writing that is the chief resource employed in interpreting the words. At this point the orchestra shows a tendency to become luxuriously chromatic but it is promptly pulled up by the indication 'Tempo del comincio'—a firm restatement of the fanfare and moving bars that had followed Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

This sort of bass has become a mark of Vaughan Williams's idiom. The question 'Darest thou now, O Soul, walk with me toward the unknown region' is answered 'I know it not, O Soul' in identical music, which however develops a greater animation, a triplet counterpoint and a change into E flat major. Key changes

abruptly brought about produce the dissolving view into which the exploring soul advances to the realm where 'all waits undreamed of'—C major, A major, B flat major, G major, and finally to the Lydian A of the beginning. Ex. 1, this time marked 'teneramente', returns like the spirit of inquiry still unabashed and unafraid. But now, when the ties are loosened and the bounds cease to confine, the harmony proceeds with more orthodox modulations, as it might be in Brahms, into the extreme sharp keys, where it is once more pulled up by Ex. 1. Only now Ex. 1 has gone into F major and becomes a long swinging tune over a marching bass (in crotchets, though, not in quavers, as in Ex. 1).

This great tune is a song tune, and the Cantata, we now recall, is not on its title-page called a cantata but a Song for chorus and orchestra. The tune, as Foss has pointed out, has already served the composer, as far as its salient opening phrase is concerned, for the last song in the *House of Life* cycle (1903), where too it shifts into F. Such coincidences are usually unobserved by composers themselves but they are never accidental. Music is at once symbol and language. Ideas find their musical equivalent. Here the underlying connexion is found in the song's title, 'Love's last gift'. The distance between Whitman and Rossetti is great, but the idea of ultimate fulfilment, though verbally different, evokes the same musical image in the mind of the composer.

There is however a further climax to come in *Toward the Unknown Region*—'O joy, O fruit of all'. Vaughan Williams goes straight at it, using conventional means that he would never have done later. He even ends fortissimo, marcato, and with a drum-roll. 'Niente' had not yet become his accustomed way of bringing the curtain down on his visions.

The text of *Toward the Unknown Region* comes from Whitman's *Whispers of Heavenly Death*.

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

The Fantasia on Christmas Carols for baritone solo, chorus, and orchestra (the ordinary full orchestra with organ and a set of bells)

was first produced at the Hereford Festival of 1912, thus following at the Three Choirs Festivals the Tallis Fantasia of 1910 at Gloucester and the *Five Mystical Songs* of 1911 at Worcester. It may be doubted whether the audience of that time recognized a single one of the four chief constituent carols acknowledged on the title-page of the score—'The Truth sent from above', 'Come all you worthy gentlemen', 'On Christmas Night', and 'There is a fountain'. They were quite unlike the Victorian carols then in current use, which were not of folk origin and were, the majority of them, still of a hearty character, in which the Dickensian idea of Christmas was prominent. But by 1912 the feeling for the mystical and the revived medieval carol was stirring, for *The Cowley Carol Book*, the principal instrument in the change of sentiment, had already been published for eleven years.

The carol revival in England goes back a long way. In 1833 Sandys, following Gilbert's example of 1822, published a small collection in which were rescued a few authentic folk-carols, e.g. 'The Cherry Tree Carol', 'I saw three ships', 'A Virgin most pure', and 'God rest you merry'. The rest had to wait for the folk-song revival of Broadwood, Sharp, and Vaughan Williams about 1900. Meantime the practice of carol singing had spread under the influence of the Oxford Movement from the home and the streets to the Church. The chief agents in this movement were the Rev. J. M. Neale and the Rev. T. Helmore, who published in 1852–4 collections containing tunes taken from the Swedish book, *Piae Cantiones*, of which 'Good King Wenceslas' was the one to capture popular imagination. Stainer and Bramley's book of 1871 extended the number and the range of carols, mixing traditional with newly composed carols. This was the collection which provided people at the turn of the century with what they regarded as traditional carols, the old tradition being now fortified by a quarter of a century of growing enthusiasm that made many of the carols doubly traditional. But by 1901 when *The Cowley Carol Book* appeared the buried folk tradition had been tapped, from which emerged not only Nativity carols but Crucifixion carols, such as were common in the sixteenth century, and pagan Wassail songs. Vaughan Williams made his own incursion into

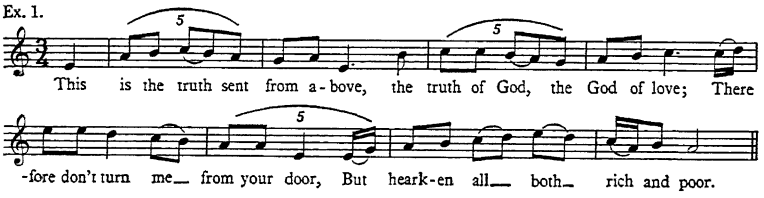
the folk tradition in Derbyshire and Yorkshire and, with Mrs. Leather, in Herefordshire. Cecil Sharp too had tapped the folk tradition in Somerset.

'Fantasia' is used in the Elizabethan sense of a contrapuntal composition in which tunes are strung in sequence. The Elizabethan fantasia for strings was fugal in texture, and when what contemporary composers called 'a point' had been sufficiently worked another one was taken up and subjected to similar treatment, just as is done in a madrigal at every two or three lines of verse. Vaughan Williams's fantasia is looser—it contains imitational writing, but it also contains unison and block harmony—and he makes allusions in the form of descants to other carols, notably 'The First Nowell' and 'The Virgin unspotted' and a Yorkshire Wassail song, so that at one point there is a sort of Quodlibet of five tunes going on at once (cf. the folk-dance ballet *On Christmas Night*, p. 252).

On the title-page three alternative scorings are permitted to facilitate the wider use of this most happy and beautiful, hearty and mystical, Christmas music. These are for strings and organ or piano, for organ alone, or for piano with solo cello. The choir moreover is warned that it is to be prepared to sing in four different ways—singing the words, singing with closed lips, singing 'Ah', and singing 'Uh' with open lips, thus producing an orchestration of voices as well as instruments.

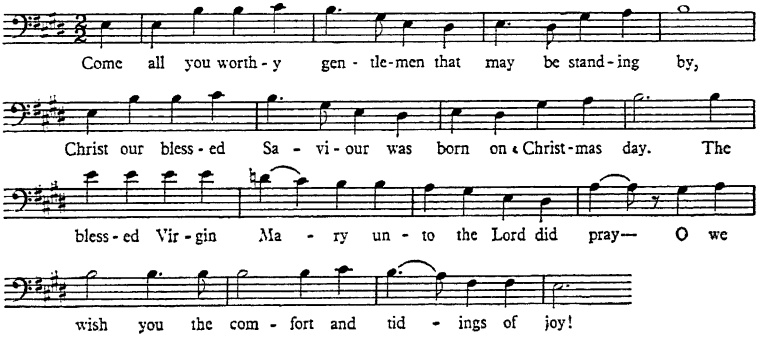
The importance of the cello is made manifest at once in that the Fantasia opens with an improvisatory passage for the solo cello which foreshadows in general shape and in tonality (the Aeolian mode) the first carol 'This is the truth sent from above'. This was collected in 1909 from Mr. W. Jenkins of Kings Pyon near Weobley in Herefordshire.

Ex. 1.



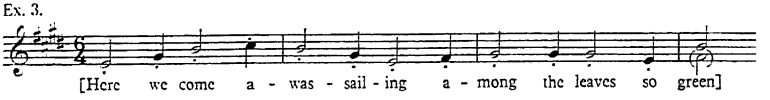
This is not strictly speaking a carol by any definition of that elusive word. Strictly a carol should have a burden at the end of each stanza, representing the physical movement of the dance, or at least of ceremonial procession, the basic definition of a carol being that it is a dance-song. This song is unusually theological for a folk-song, dealing in the short space of four verses with the Creation, the Fall, and Redemption. In the last verse the promise of redemption gives the song its connexion with Christmas. The tune, which begins like 'Searching for Lambs', is sung by the baritone soloist and accompanied by a piece of four-part imitation for voices using the humming tone prescribed by the composer. This passage recurs after each verse and so, by compensating for the lack of the burden, turns the song into a carol. In the last verse the choir takes over the words from the soloist.

The second carol is linked to the first by a brief phrase of cello solo on the same tune, but the key is brusquely changed to a bright E major for 'Come all you worthy gentlemen' which is a true carol of the Nativity, of which the burden is 'O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy':

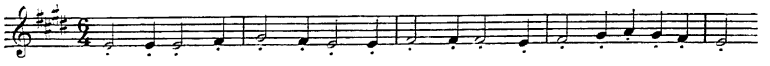
Ex. 2.

This carol was collected by Cecil Sharp from Mr. Rapsey of Bridgwater in Somerset, who told Sharp that he learned it from his mother and used to sing it in the streets as a boy. Tenors and basses sing the first verse in unison, sopranos and altos join in for the burden in harmony. At the end of the second verse 'The First Nowell' is heard aloft in the orchestra. Before the third verse

another carol is interposed. When the carol is resumed—it provides the ending of the Fantasia—two other quotations are made by the orchestra, the first the beginning of the Yorkshire 'The Wassail Bough' (see *English County Songs*):

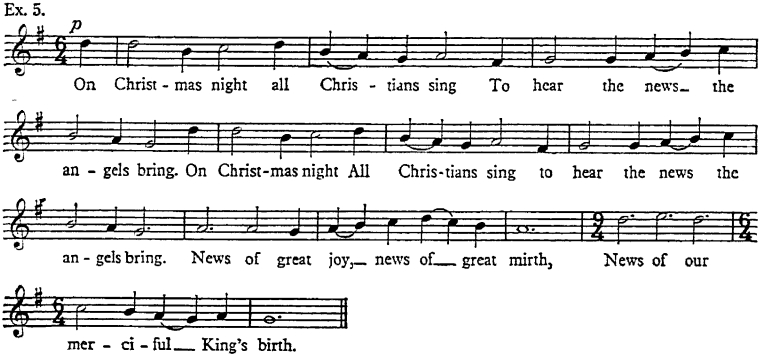
Ex. 3.



the other a snatch of a dance or singing-game tune:

Ex. 4.

Before we come to these and even greater complexities, the third carol 'On Christmas Night' is interpolated in G major. The baritone soloist sings the first verse, and like the old parish clerks who gave out the psalms, is echoed line by line by the chorus. This carol was collected by Vaughan Williams himself from Mrs. Verrall of Monks Gate, near Horsham, in Sussex in 1904. The tune gets an access of splendour from the broadening into triple time at the end. This cadence figure to the familiar words of the Benediction supply the composer with his final, prolonged, and exquisite cadence.

Ex. 5.



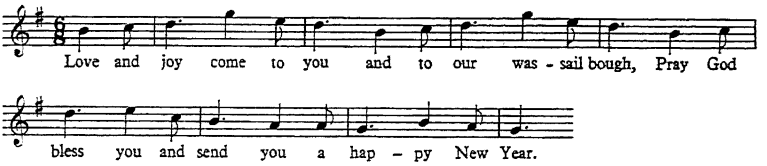
The chorus have to be content with 'Ah' in harmony as an accompaniment to the soloist who has a certain amount of

theology to preach. The last two bars are subjected to development 'pochinetto animato' to make a climax which the composer tops with another quotation from 'The Wassail Bough', taken this time from the end where the wassailers are beginning to wish the householder a happy New Year with a view to taking up their collection. Wassail songs belong essentially to the turn of the year and are concerned ultimately with vegetation magic. They usually end with a verse beginning

God bless the master of this house,

and finishing with a wish for a happy New Year to the household. By quoting this wassail tune

Ex. 6.



Vaughan Williams is preparing to revert to the carol 'Come all you worthy gentlemen', whose last verse runs thus:

God bless the ruler of this house
And long on may he reign.
Many happy Christmases
He live to see again!
God bless our generation
Who live both far and near,
And we wish them a happy, a happy New Year.

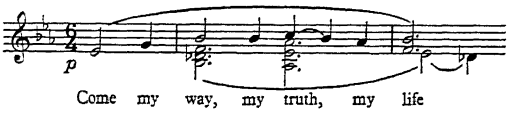
The baritone soloist duly sings it, while the chorus interjects some of the lines of 'On Christmas Night', and it is here that the quotations Exx. 4 and 6 occur. The two carols are combined from here to the end, and upon them is superimposed 'The Virgin unspotted', 'The First Nowell' and both parts of 'The Wassail Bough'. Bells begin to chime, but as their clangour dies down the soloist sings 'O we wish you a happy New Year' and the chorus answers with 'Both now and ever more, Amen' extremely softly, as though by now they had reached the end of the street.

Five Mystical Songs

The *Five Mystical Songs*, settings of poems by George Herbert, form a cycle in which baritone solo, chorus, and orchestra are combined. It is hardly more a choral work than *Willow Wood*, except that the chorus is of mixed voices, but it was written for a Three Choirs Festival and is too large in intention, design, and lay-out to be assigned to any other category than the choral, though it is possible to sing the cycle with piano alone and without chorus.

The religious poets of the seventeenth century, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, and Thomas Traherne, are generally described as mystics to distinguish them from the metaphysical poets, of whom Abraham Cowley and John Donne are the chief. Although both 'mystical' and 'metaphysical' ought to be, and sometimes are, thus enclosed in inverted commas to indicate their restricted meaning, the labels are fairly correct at their face value. Metaphysics is an inquiry employing ratiocination, even in poetry; mysticism is a vision employing intuition. George Herbert's faith is mystical but the argument of 'Love bade me welcome', No. 3 in Vaughan Williams's cycle, is in the metaphysical manner and the distinction is not absolute. Vaughan Williams's general attitude of mind is mystical rather than metaphysical, and that he should sooner or later light on Herbert and Crashaw (in the *Four Hymns*) is natural for the expression of less pantheistic frames of mind than Whitman's. He found Herbert at a moment of transition in his style when his idiom had just crystallized sufficiently to enable him to produce something almost as decisively his own in vocal music as the Tallis Fantasia, which had been played at the previous festival in 1910.

Almost as decisively—but not quite, since in the first song 'Easter' there remain traces of the old romantic idiom which he had employed in his Rossetti period—the triplet accompaniment and the secondary sevenths noted by Foss. In the second song 'I got me flowers' there are incessant changes of time-signature, though the vocal line runs on with the flexibility of plainsong and with

two other of its characteristics—a generally syllabic underlay of the words and the use of short melismata to break it up. In 'Love bade me welcome' the choir actually sings (without the words to 'Ah') the chant 'O sacrum convivium', a form of quotation more common in literature than in music but employed by Vaughan Williams with comparative frequency, because he to a degree rare among musicians really cares for tunes and has them stored, names, history and all, in his memory for ready recall. The accompaniment to this song is of the swaying chord type which looks back to the *Songs of Travel*. In No. 4, 'The Call', there is no part for chorus, but we have authentic Vaughan Williams, modal harmony, consecutive triads, and characteristic line:

'Antiphon', No. 5, is a moto perpetuo with a strong false relation involving the key note to give the harmony bite while the men of the chorus sing the opening line in unison. It is repeated in harmony and there is nothing for the soloist. (For the soloist there is only an alternative version without chorus.) This finale has something of the Sea Symphony in its boisterous 'Let all the world in every corner sing'.

The cycle was first sung by J. Campbell McInnes at the Worcester Festival of 1911. The distinctive personality of the composer can be felt in it and the rhythmic elasticity of 'I got me flowers' is a sign of emancipation. The music looks forward but it is still idiomatically old-fashioned.

Mass in G minor

The Ordinary of the Mass has appealed in every generation to composers because, whatever their individual shade of belief, it enshrines a complete religious experience—*Kyrie* is invocation, *Gloria* is thanksgiving, *Credo* is faith, *Sanctus* worship, and *Agnus Dei* supplication. Within this ample formula man's attitude to the

eternal mysteries can find expression without violence to personal conviction. Music, being for the most part a non-conceptual kind of thinking, finds in this lapidary Latin text concepts of sufficient abstraction to produce, in association with the abstraction of music, a suitable medium for the contemplation of the divine verities. The *Credo* alone presents difficulties. Schweitzer, himself theologian and musician in one, says 'The Nicene Creed is a hard nut for a composer to crack. If ever there was a text put together without any idea of its being set to music, it is this, in which the Greek theologians have laid down their correct and dry formulas for the conception of the Godhead of Christ.' Parts of it, for example, *Incarnatus*, are fertile of music and have stirred to their depths the imaginations of Byrd, Bach, and Beethoven, but other parts, 'unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam', for instance, have simply to be traversed by the composer as expeditiously and euphoniously as possible. In strictly liturgical settings, where brevity is a virtue, the problem can be solved without too great difficulty. For a devout believer the theology presents no intellectual stumbling block. A composer to whom the formulae may present intellectual difficulty can still by the exercise of the imagination penetrate to the thought beyond the formulae. Even for purposes of strictly intellectual criticism of a philosophy it is necessary, as Russell has discerningly urged, for the critic first to put himself imaginatively in the author's place before he proceeds to demolish his thought. In making a setting of the Creed it is not the musician's task, nor will it be his wish, to embark on theological criticism. What he has to do is to penetrate by direct vision to the central truth at the heart of the mystery. The whole quality of Vaughan Williams's mind is mystical in this sense. The word 'mystical' is one to avoid if possible and only to use when it means precisely this immediate apprehension of ultimate reality which is only vouchsafed to few mortals. Other men, including the ablest, must struggle by every means in their power, which is to say by every faculty they possess, to come at ultimate truth—by intellectual labour, by flight of the imagination, by quickness of intuition, by responsiveness of emotion, even maybe by the acuity of their senses. Religion has been longest in this quest, philosophy

almost as long; some achieve the vision through poetry, some nowadays by mathematics, and some by music. Beethoven was the first composer to seek to grasp metaphysical ultimates by music, but in recent years with the decay in dogmatic religion, vast numbers of ordinary people, seeing in music a symbol of order in the universe, have caught a glimpse of what they would fain believe in musical experience.

Vaughan Williams is more mystical than metaphysical and in the later symphonies has shown the prophet's penetration and insight into the heart of things. It is not therefore unnatural nor inappropriate for him to set the Roman Mass. The precipitating cause was Sir Richard Terry's work at Westminster Cathedral, which has seen the revival of the polyphonic style and the recall to active service of the Masses of Byrd and the motets of the English polyphonists after centuries of oblivion. The Mass in G minor was therefore composed for liturgical use, and is thus in the tradition of Byrd, not of Bach or Beethoven. It was submitted to Terry for scrutiny as to its liturgical propriety. In spite of this however an error found its way into the text which was detected by the printer, of all people. In the *Credo* the word 'apostolicam' somehow was missing. It has been inserted into the bass line but there is no room for it in the tenor, alto, and soprano entries that follow in imitation. The Mass was however often sung liturgically by Terry's choir at Westminster Cathedral after its first performance at Birmingham Town Hall in 1923. It has been fitted with English words and its *Credo* and *Sanctus* were sung at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey. But it does also have concert performances by choral societies and it was dedicated to Gustav Holst and his Whitsuntide Singers, who made it very much their own at their yearly gatherings.

Its layout is like that of the Tallis Fantasia for Strings, of which in spirit, style, and Elizabethan inspiration it is the vocal counterpart, i.e. it is set for double choir and four soloists. It provides a *locus classicus* for neo-modal harmony. The modes flourished through 500 years of vocal polyphony and then under evolutionary pressure two of them, the Aeolian and Ionian, formed a partnership to the exclusion of the others, which revolutionized

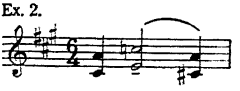
harmony. As modal organization decayed the major-minor key system took its place and vast new territories of tonal relationship were opened up in the course of the three centuries from 1600 to 1900. This system of tonality then showed signs of exhaustion and our present century has seen many kinds of search and experiment to find alternative systems of organization. One line of search was to take up again the discarded church modes and to use them, not in the old careful way in which little modulation was possible, but in a new way in which the resources of three centuries of harmonic development could be applied to other modes than the Aeolian and the Ionian. Vaughan Williams was a pioneer in the use of modal melody and in developing the right kind of modal harmony to go with it.

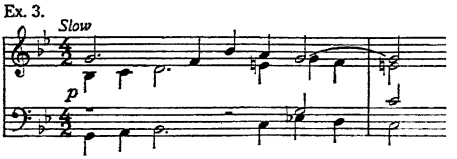
Another stylistic feature to be recovered from the past is false relation, or, as it is more suitably called by the Americans, cross relation. This is a harmonic idiom that has appealed to English taste throughout the centuries but which rarely occurs in the main continental traditions, though it is found in Schütz's Passions. An example from Byrd will show what it is and why it is stigmatized as a logical falsity:

Ex. 1.

The F is inflected sharp in the treble and natural in the bass in the next chord. The rules for good part-writing in classical harmony forbid such progressions as being illogical, and contradictory, and confusing of the tonality, and prescribe that if a change is to be made it must be in the same part. The justification for transgression of the rule, which was observed by Palestrina though not by Byrd, is the contrapuntal movement of the parts. The ordinary melodic minor scale as practised by young pianists is to their bewilderment different in its ascending and descending forms, and the tendency to sharpen in an ascending and to flatten in a descending passage, as manifested in that scale, accounts for some of the false relations

in Elizabethan polyphony. But English composers seem to like the piquancy of the sound for its own sake, so that Walton can write in his viola concerto

Ex. 2.

and the idiom only lapsed during the nineteenth-century domination of our music by Mendelssohn. Brahms's Third Symphony is the chief instance of its use by a German master, who bases the main argument of the whole work on the conflict of the sharp or natural inflexion of the third degree of the scale of F, which he precipitates by the false relation in the first two bars. Vaughan Williams's use of it in the Mass in G minor is a revival of the Elizabethan usage. Here in the opening bars of the optional organ introduction we see an example entirely in Byrd's manner:

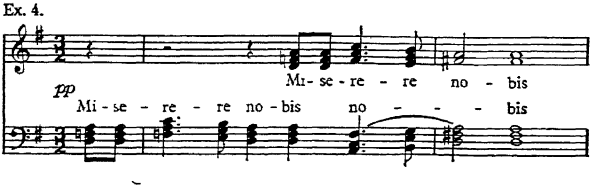
Ex. 3.

where the two E's are differently inflected in adjacent pulses. Truth to tell, the idiom became fashionable during the heyday of the Tudor revival and was overworked in the harmonization of carols and such things for which Mendelssohnian harmony had come to seem anachronistic and out of style.

The organ introductions are provided 'only to give the pitch at the start and to restore it if lost during the course of a movement'. The Mass is intended to be sung unaccompanied, but with his usual eye for the practicable the composer adds an *ad libitum* organ part for use if it is not found expedient to sing the Mass entirely *a cappella*.

The *Kyrie* falls into its three divisions, of which the two outer sections to the words *Kyrie eleison* bear the signature of two flats and thus appear to be in G minor, whereas the *Christe eleison* section in the middle bears the signature of one sharp and so purports to be in G major. But the facts are otherwise: the *Kyrie*

eleison is in the Dorian mode on G, the *Christe eleison* in the Dorian mode on D (its traditionally associated pitch). We thus have the later practice of a dominant modulation for *Christe eleison* applied to a polyphony which is in itself modal, though it is to be noted that it is not consistently archaic. The opening *Kyrie* begins like a fugal exposition with subject and answer—beginning with the answer if the organ introduction is disregarded—a fifth apart but all in the Dorian mode. For *Christe eleison* the soloists are responsible, thus producing an effect of scoring or registration in the organist's sense, but in this section the Dorian mode is diversified by sharpened thirds and sevenths which produce touches of harmonic brightness and incidental false relations. The chorus resumes *Kyrie eleison*, which is slightly extended into a long cadence. Out of the last chord of G minor the alto voice projects with the same theme as that with which it opened the movement, which centres not on G but D. These various procedures, which do not obey the limitations of modal counterpoint, fugal writing, or classical tonality, are perfectly logical, completely satisfying, and most illuminating of the way in which a modern style has been fashioned out of an old.

In the *Gloria* the double choir is used in a wide-spread eight-part block harmony for 'et in terra pax' (which follows the liturgical intonation by tenor voice of the words 'Gloria in excelsis Deo') and in antiphony for 'laudamus Te, benedicimus Te', with a fine crop of consecutive fifths and octaves in the part-writing, which led to light-hearted comment about 'neo-organum' and to the slogan 'Back to Hucbald'. A single page devoted to the words 'miserere nobis' shows how conventional and neo-modal harmony can be combined: the unexceptionable chords of the sixth (6/3) in consecutives alternate and finally merge with the prohibited common chords in root position (5/3) used consecutively:

Ex. 4.

The solo quartet is used both severally and together for the further variation of the texture.

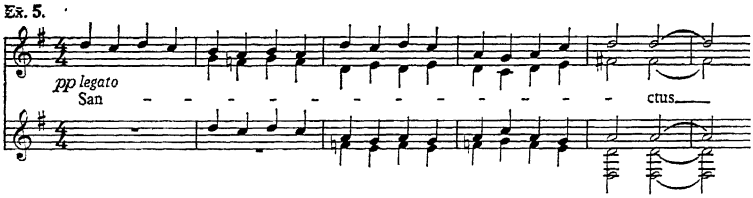
In the theological propositions of the Creed there are embedded ideas which make a strong appeal to the imagination, flowers amid arid intellectual wastes from the musician's point of view. The Incarnation is one such; the death, burial, and Resurrection is another—one thinks of the *Crucifixus* chorus of Bach's B minor Mass, for instance, with its throbbing ground bass and its miraculous cadence at 'sepultus est'. But Byrd's Masses, being conceived for liturgical use, provide closer analogies for applying to this G minor Mass than do either the great oratorio Masses of Bach and Beethoven, or the elaborate liturgical settings of Haydn and Mozart. Byrd's treatment of the Incarnation in the Mass for Three Voices, for instance, is not an elaboration of the counterpoint by repetition of the text, but a subtle harmonic colouring of the tonality by what is virtually a plunge into the subdominant.

In the first part of the *Credo* Vaughan Williams uses antiphony between, and overlapping of, the two choirs to traverse the attributes of Godhead—'visibilium et invisibilium', 'Deum de deo', 'lumen de lumine', and so on. 'Descendit de caelis' is depicted in a descending progression of three of the four parts for 'descendit' and a triad progression of F G F enlarged to eight-part harmony for 'caelis'. 'Et incarnatus' follows in a sober piece of quasi-academic counterpoint which flowers miraculously at the miracle of God becoming Man. The Incarnation also is depicted in an eight-part chordal progression, the final chord of F containing the tonic at four different octave pitches. 'Crucifixus' is given to a single voice, the alto soloist; 'passus et sepultus' to five-part choral harmony with a very small melisma in the soprano part, such as one finds in Byrd. The vision of the Second Coming produces a climax of tone and animation, followed by a return to theology and *Amen*. The task of dissolving the Nicene Creed into music has once more been satisfactorily accomplished—satisfactorily, that is to say, to the Church whose faith it proclaims without the distractions and over-elaborations of music against which it has often been obliged to protest, satisfactory to the musician in making the counterpoint fluent and swift, and satisfactory to the artist in that the great

imaginative conceptions contained in the dogmas of the intellect have once more flowered in music.

Sanctus, *Osanna I*, *Benedictus*, and *Osanna II* are set in one continuous section of which the main tonality is G major. To set out in words the extraordinary resource with which a few notes of the diatonic scale are made to encompass heaven and earth and fill them with the glory of the Lord is to falsify their sublime simplicity. Nothing could show, as these few pages do, the undreamed possibilities of half a diatonic scale, of a tonality enriched by long discarded but now reinstated modes, of the significance of a flattened seventh and a sharpened third (though Schubert taught that trick to all subsequent generations), of a cross-accent of twos placed across bars of three time (though Schumann had played with that device to some purpose in the piano concerto).

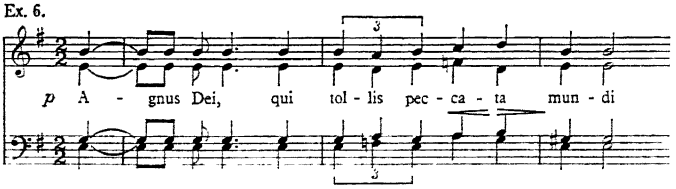
The word 'Sanctus' is set to a gentle melismatic theme which is taken up at a bar's distance by the sopranos and altos of each choir:

Ex. 5.

Here is a mixture of the Dorian and Mixolydian modes in a context of G major leading by imitational entries to a major chord on D. The first repetition leads to a major chord on G, the second to a major chord on A, major chords which have the effect of bright clear light. 'Pleni sunt caeli' is treated in a similar kind of imitation but without the intervening punctuating chords and arriving ultimately on a chord of E major, brighter still. For *Osanna* we descend to a more sober mode, E minor with a flattened seventh, and the feeling of exultation is produced by antiphony and overlapping rhythms. All this has been sung by the two choirs. For *Benedictus* the solo quartet is invoked, to which the combined choirs (in four parts) sing quiet responses. The second *Osanna* is quite unlike the first, being in a broader movement without that repetition of the words which had given animation to the

first *Osanna*, but ending after a blaze of tone on a unison G. The riches and economy are equally remarkable.

The device of the ambiguously inflected third together with a slow triplet is responsible for the distinctive character of the *Agnus Dei* thus:

Ex. 6.



The soloists, who begin, arrive from E minor at a chord of E major and to it the choirs respond with a similar progression from G minor to G major. Then after an imitational 'miserere nobis' the chorus sings Ex. 6 E to E and the soloists respond with the transposed version from G to G. What follows is an unexpected loan from *Christe eleison*—the supplication for peace is made to the Prince of Peace. Thereafter the two choirs separate and build up a coda to the same words, in which the soloists also join for the last great sequence of chords, mostly in root position, arriving finally at the tonic chord of G major.

Flos Campi

'Consider the lilies of the field', said Jesus, but their beauty to which he drew attention was not an object of contemplation in itself; the lily, in fact, was not so much a sheer delight as a symbol. The purpose of a symbol is to embody an idea, and the idea embodied in the lily was the providence of God. The New Testament Greek for 'consider' is *καταμάθετε*, 'learn'. But one can consider lilies without learning anything, and indeed without any kind of intellectual apprehension beyond the vaguest notion that they are somehow a tangible token of order prevailing obscurely in the world. They may be sensuously enjoyed for what they are and provide the considerer of lilies with a sensuous experience. This when held fast in recollection is called an image.

All artists work in images, but works of art, at any rate in the larger forms and in stages of development beyond the primitive, also deal in ideas. In so far as music is a phenomenon of mind and not merely of ear the composer is perpetually translating ideas into images, aural images, for literature (including drama) alone of the arts deals directly with ideas (or thought) as its material. Painters and composers must translate their ideas into other mediums. This translating process is common in every art, and by it one work of art can inspire the creation of another—as we find in *Job*, which is the last link of a chain that began with a Hebrew drama, which was translated by Blake into a series of engravings which were in turn translated into music by Vaughan Williams. Now Blake is a rare example of an artist who pursued equally two different arts, poetry and drawing, poetry which is mainly idea and drawing which is mainly image. Critics of Blake (see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, eleventh edition) justly point out that the balance, which was at first evenly held, finally overturned because the image predominated. 'He endeavoured constantly to treat the intellectual material of verse as if it could be moulded into sensuous form.' Ultimately he failed and his poetry became incoherent. But, on the other hand, his drawing, of which the illustrations to the Book of Job are a supreme example, became stronger and clearer. 'For', as the critic already quoted remarks, 'this tendency to translate ideas into image, and to find for every thought, however simple or sublime, a precise and sensuous form, is the essence of pure artistic invention' (referring in 'artistic' to the graphic arts).

The *Song of Solomon* has been variously explained as an allegory and as a drama and as a collection of lyrics. The last is the most probable: here is an anthology of epithalamia, songs sung at wedding ceremonies in the Near East. Though this purpose is undeniably and palpably erotic, the contemplative element must be strong not only in the poetry but in the acts of love. Consider the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley, but 'consider' in the sense of 'contemplate'. This is what Vaughan Williams does in *Flos Campi*. His music is always ruminative, i.e. there is thought going on behind the contemplation but it is never pursued to a

conclusion: the sheer sensuous joy of contemplation is the prime fact. There is therefore no need to look for a connected chain of thought behind the six numbers of this suite for solo viola, voices, and small orchestra, nor to puzzle over the interconnexions of the quotations from the Vulgate which are their superscriptions. They contain the poetic imagery which the composer translates into music. The flower of the field of the title is not the lily as a symbol either of God's providence or of Solomon's love; it is the lily as a pure image.

The lily is a delight to the eye. To behold it is a pleasure of sense. Among northern peoples there is oddly enough a mistrust of the senses amounting to fear. Oddly, because climate itself is an insurance against those excesses which are feared. Nevertheless, something in our nature has provided the basis for a strong streak of Puritanism which in the alternate ebbing and flowing of social custom abides as a force in our lives. But farther south and farther east the direct pleasures of our highly developed bodies, the tingling reactions of our supersensitive nerves, the extreme delicacy of three of our five senses and reasonable efficiency of the other two, are prized among the supreme goods of life. Sensuality, the pursuit of these indescribable pleasures, is subject to no moral reproach; it is a wise fulfilment of capacities that would otherwise be wasted; it is an enrichment of life. European sensuality usually gets no farther than Vienna, with its abundance of sugar and spice and all things nice—pretty girls and smart uniforms among them in the old days. Strauss represents in music the acme of this sensuality of escape from the nineteenth-century ideal of working hard and getting rich. And Vaughan Williams has little enough in common with Richard Strauss. But in *Flos Campi* he seeks to interpret the sensuality of the ancient, and in these respects unchanging, East. It is in fact the most sensual work he has written, and the sensuous beauty of sound is of prime importance. He has therefore scored it for an orchestra in which every instrument retains its individual flavour to the utmost. One each of the wind makes an ensemble in which the individual flavours are never submerged in the ordinary orchestral tutti. There is a representative battery of the more exotic instruments—a harp, celesta,

triangle, cymbals, drum and tabor. And even more immediate in its direct appeal to the senses is the wordless chorus of twenty to twenty-six voices.

The first performance of *Flos Campi* took place at Queen's Hall under Sir Henry Wood on 10 October 1925. It was performed at the Geneva festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in April 1929. It has never achieved frequent performance.

The actual stuff of the music is a progress from a keyless, rhythmless, arabesque-like melody signifying desire and longing for the beloved (*amore langueo*):

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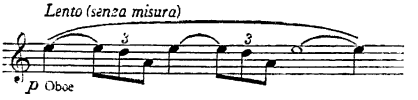
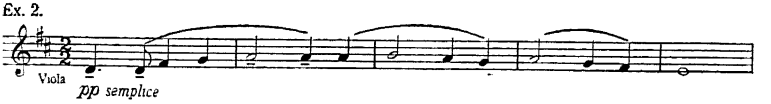

to a diatonic, rhythmic, almost marchlike, theme, worked contrapuntally in canon and imitation expressive of fulfilment (*Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum*, 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart').

Ex. 2.

No. I

Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias . . . Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo.

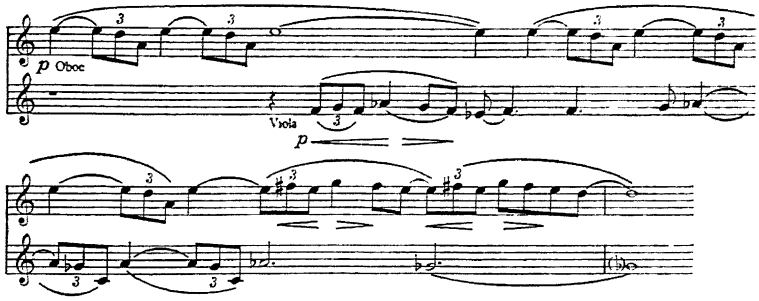
'As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters . . . Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.' (ii. 2 and 5.)

N.B. *Amore langueo* does not mean what the words 'I am sick of love' mean in modern speech. The Authorized Version means what the Latin means—'I faint from longing.'

The opening passage of *Flos Campi* has been quoted in the seventh volume of the *Oxford History of Music* as an epitome of what modernism in music means, albeit the composer 'is not held to be an extremist of the modern school'. It is in simple two-part counterpoint, each tune in a different—a different what? for

neither 'key', 'scale', nor 'mode' is an accurate description of the melodic organization actually employed. Here is the passage:

Ex. 3. *Lento (senza misura)*



The oboe is playing in a sort of Dorian but gapped mode on E—E seems to be the tonic rather than A because it is so strongly emphasized. The viola is playing in a something that feels like F minor, in spite of the prominent flattened supertonic, and is subsequently confirmed as such. The mode on E and the mode on F not only produce an effect of a tug-of-war between two tonal centres but contain clashes between E natural and E flat, A natural and A flat. Colles compares this with the once iconoclastic prelude to *Tristan* and makes the following deduction about twentieth-century procedure as compared with the nineteenth:

(1) A tune may be made on any series of notes, even on a scale constituted *ad hoc* (as here).
(2) Two or more of such tunes may be heard simultaneously, each one built on a different scale, and without conforming to any agreed standard of consonance.
(3) Rhythm is capable of infinite variety and need not be referred to any measurement by regularly recurring accents.

This opening number is short and formally is as free as its rhythm. It is, in fact, a rhapsodic prelude. The counterpoint of single-line melodies becomes a counterpoint of chords—6/3s mostly in the treble and 8/5s without thirds mostly in the bass—and the clash of mode is maintained, so that the second postulate above could be expanded to include the practice of substituting harmonic clusters for melodic lines which was initiated by

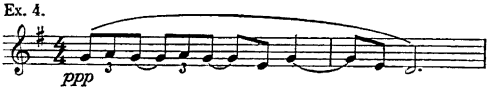
Debussy. The harmonic clusters here appear immediately after Ex. 3 in the form of triads played softly on strings, as though they were an accompaniment to a long-held note on the viola, but they reappear later on voices as one line of force maintained against a stream of counterpoint in the orchestra. This prelude is an example of a piece of music that relies for its unity, not on structural devices, but kinship of themes which grow one out of the other, and identity of mood.

No. II

Jam enim hiems transiit: imber abiit, et recessit; flores apparuerunt in terra nostra, tempus putationis advenit; vox turturis audita est in terra nostra.

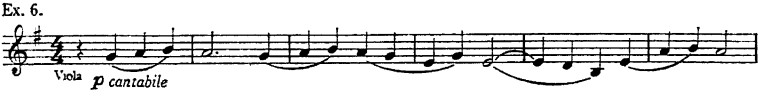
'For lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.' (ii. 11 and 12.)

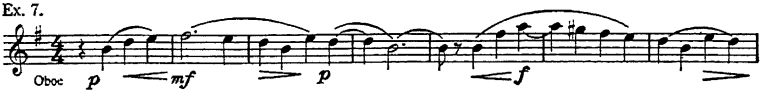
An undulating figure at the end of I leads without a break into a pastoral movement. The viola is silent at first and the voices combine with strings. What emerges from the soft haze of sound is female voices passing to each other in antiphony this phrase:

Ex. 4.

while underneath another theme stirs:

Ex. 5.

When the viola takes them up they have emerged into a long flowing melody:

Ex. 6.

As spring awakens the tonality becomes a more whole-hearted G major and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land:

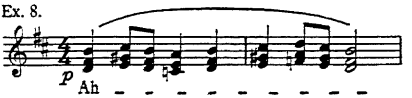
Ex. 7.

the same song of spring, be it observed, with a bolder contour and bigger intervals. The voices now take up Ex. 6 in unison, then the celesta does the same in chords of the sixth, and though the directions never indicate anything louder than piano except for a single solo entry of the viola, whose forte is immediately qualified with dolce, the score glows for a while and then dies down while the harp echoes a fragment of the theme in diminution.

No. III

Quaesivi quem diligit anima mea; quaesivi illum et non inveni . . . 'Adjuro vos, filiae Jerusalem, si inveneritis dilectum meum, ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo' . . . quo abiit dilectus tuus, O pulcherrima mulierum? Quo declinavit dilectus tuus? ut quaeremus eum tecum.

'I sought him whom my soul loveth, but I found him not . . . "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love" . . . Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.' (iii. 1, v. 8, vi. 1.)

The viola unaccompanied pursues its quest for the beloved in Ex. 1 transposed to a lower pitch. The female voices enter in three parts in a phrase that eventually becomes

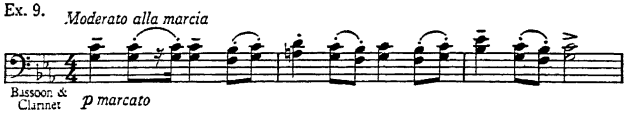
Ex. 8.

Then the voices take up an appropriate form of Ex. 1, and vie with the viola in impassioned counterpoint that still rarely rises much above a murmur.

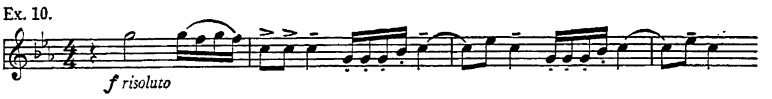
No. IV

En lectulum Salomonis sexaginta fortes ambiunt . . . omnes tententes gladios, et ad bella doctissimi.

'Behold his bed which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it . . . They all hold swords, being expert in war.' (iii. 7 and 8.)

The time has now come for greater vigour. Woodwind give out a march tune in characteristically bare fourths:

Ex. 9.

This is filled out in various ways, but the chords always remain triads moving in similar motion. The viola enters high up in its compass risoluto:

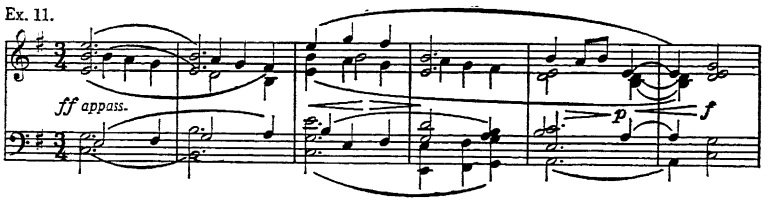
Ex. 10.

The two themes are worked together and the voices enter to swell the volume of tone in the last four fortissimo bars. At the climax the scene changes.

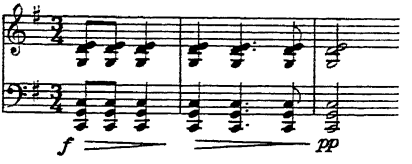
No. V

Revertere, revertere Sulamitis! Revertere, revertere ut intueamur te . . . Quam pulchri sunt gressus tui in calceamentis, filia principis.

'Return, return, O Shulamite! Return, return that we may look upon thee . . . How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O Prince's daughter.' (vi. 13 and vii. 1.)

Two main ideas alternate in this, the most passionate section of the work, and the thread which binds them is the viola solo which draws for a legitimate artistic purpose on its powers of virtuosity. The first is a broad choral passage in seven parts 'appassionato largamente':

Ex. 11.

and the second is a thrumming on the strings:

Ex. 12.

This second figure in changed harmonies and with the quavers appearing on different beats of the bar is repeated in alternation with Ex. 11, until its speed is doubled and its constituent notes reduced to half their denomination while the voices sing agitato a new phrase:

Ex. 13.

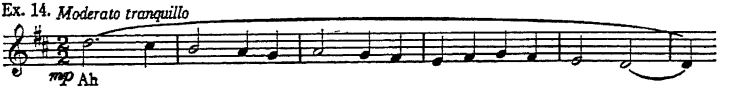
After the climax *fff* this is sung again more slowly, and in a more varied rhythm, as the tension relaxes, and, after a cadenza from the viola, dies right away; underneath, the bassoons and the horns breathe the first hint of Ex. 2.

No. VI

Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum.

'Set me as a seal upon thine heart.' (viii. 6.)

Ex. 2 is now taken up by one instrument after another through the orchestra, including the celesta and harp, which play it in chords. The voices sing a counterpoint, nearly but not quite an inversion of it:

Ex. 14. *Moderato tranquillo*

The whole gamut of the orchestra is covered; the voices branch out into eight parts and the whole effect is broadened but without

any great weight of tone. There is an interruption just before the end in which Ex. 3 is recalled in order to show the distance traversed, the problem solved, the satisfaction won. And then Ex. 14 begins again, in harmony which continually approaches unison, the instruments fall away save for a solitary flute, and even that is silent before the end, which is left to the voices singing pianissimo with closed lips and the solo viola echoing a broken phrase of Ex. 2 in the last bars of all.

Sancta Civitas

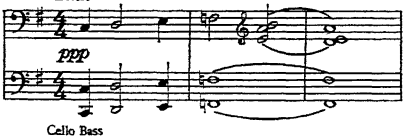
Sancta Civitas is the only work in Vaughan Williams's large output which can with any accuracy be described as a Biblical oratorio, and it is, even so, shorter than most works that come under that designation—it takes a little over half an hour in performance. Its text is drawn in the main from the Authorized Version with some excerpts from Taverner's Bible (1539). But here is no set-piece on Old Testament history such as had expired after a long run in Parry's *Judith*. Nor, though its subject is akin, is it in the newer dramatic form used by Elgar in *The Dream of Gerontius*. Its words are mostly from the Book of Revelation and its character places it among the group of Vaughan Williams's settings of apocalyptic words beginning with the *Five Mystical Songs* and extending to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Its subject is the life after death, as is hinted in the quotation from Plato on the fly-leaf, and its vision is of the Holy City, where we hope to dwell with God.

The quotation from the *Phaedo*, in which Socrates during his last hours is discoursing with his disciples about immortality, may be translated thus:

> No reasonable man ought to be dogmatic about the details of what I have just been through, yet something of the sort is the truth about our souls and their habitation after death, since in any event the soul appears to be immortal. So it seems to me that it is right and proper to take the risk of holding this opinion—for risk is a fine thing—and a man should, as it were, have it as a song in his heart and sing about it.

The music that follows is *τό ἐπάδειν*, the song of immortality. This 'song', set out for three choirs and two soloists with orchestra, falls into three sections. The first section proclaims the vision of Heaven in terms of Revelation xix; the second deals with the destruction of Babylon, symbol of all that is worldly, as found in Revelation xviii; the third section is the City of God, as described in Revelation xxi. The composer's verbal omissions are masterly and the concentration both of sense and symbolism so obtained provides the tight nucleus upon which the music can hold and from which it can expand in a great incandescence of sound.

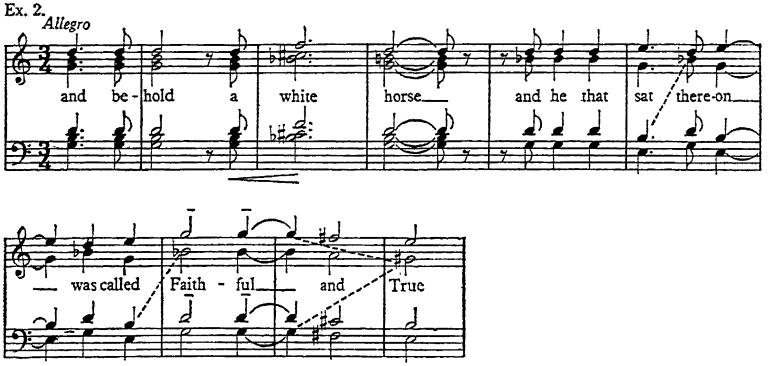
The theme of the vision heard in the first and the last bars consists of an upward progression in the bass (as in the London and Pastoral Symphonies) and swaying chords, each of which contains the dissonant interval of the major second:

Ex. 1.

Against this theme repeated and expanded the baritone soloist begins 'I was in the spirit and I heard a great voice saying Alleluia'. The Alleluias are taken up by semi-chorus and full chorus in an antiphony which immediately becomes a stretto; meantime the two chords of Ex. 1 begin to oscillate in quaver triplets. It is all quite quiet and short, hardly more than an introduction. A big choral section, as it were the first subject, is now announced by the distant choir with which is associated a solo trumpet. The key is A flat and the bass is a pedal point on C. To the hymning of the three choirs, the baritone soloist continues to add the visionary catalogue, the waters saying Alleluia and the adornment of the bride of the Lamb—her fine linen being the righteousness of the Saints—but the composer is not concerned with the interpretation of the symbolism; for him the symbols are sufficient. The distant choir and trumpet are heard again to complete the section.

But Heaven has yet to be opened and Ex. 1 is recalled. The vision of the white horse is depicted in those strong diatonic

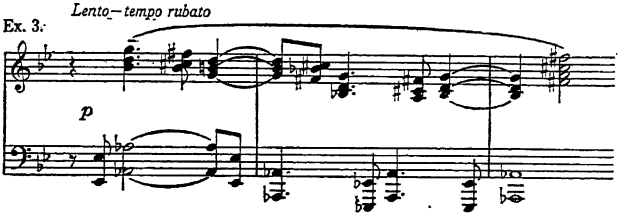
harmonies of consecutive triads made austere with false relations that were to become the composer's constant idiom for paeans and visions:

Ex. 2.



This section develops to a big climax on triadic chords, echoed by the brass, for the words 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords'. A third section, originally assigned to the soloist but now always sung by the choir in unison over a terrific double pedal, describes the Angel standing in the sun and gathering the armies together for the destruction of Babylon. At the mere idea of war the triadic harmonies move in chromatic progression. The middle division of the work begins with another bass figure beneath oscillating chords but in a different tonality, a more acute harmonization and with overlapping rhythm.

Ex. 3.

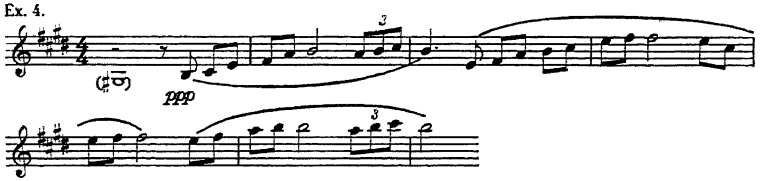


The fall of Babylon is recounted in vigorous choral writing in imitation and antiphony between chorus and semi-chorus, whereupon the distant choir and trumpet rejoice in the same terms, i.e. in A flat over a drum-roll on C, as when they had sung 'Alleluia'.

After joy at the fall there is a lament for Babylon; the baritone soloist tells of the Angel and the millstone which he cast into the sea. The musical delineation of this is similar to that of the Angel in the sun, i.e. double pedal and chromatic descending triads. This alternation and recurrence of ideas gives to the work a strong cohesion.

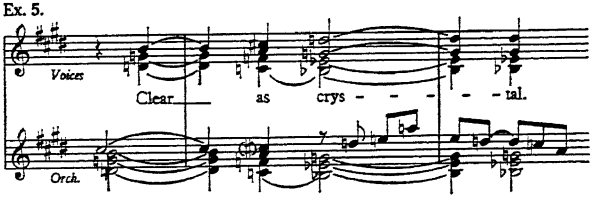
But now the time has come for the vision of a new heaven and a new earth. The tempo changes to adagio, the key signature to E major, and a new melodic idea is announced by a solo violin, a presage of Elihu in *Job*:

Ex. 4.



There are some harmonic clashes in the description of the precious stones which are harsh and were no doubt one of the factors that disturbed listeners to the first performance at Oxford in 1926 (of whom I was certainly one to be offended), and it is still permissible to doubt whether

Ex. 5.



really does sound as clear as crystal. A little further on there is a musical image, evoked by the idea of God Almighty needing no temple because he is his own temple, that is similar to the musical image in *Job* evoked by the Sons of the Morning before the Throne. It consists of swaying triads a tone apart with a high violin part above it coming down in cross-rhythm. (In *Job* the two elements are less tightly enmeshed.)

The Heavenly City is described in a straightforward passage of choral writing with a sort of descant for orchestra over a slowly changing bass. But for the face of God and the light that emanates from it the music reverts to Ex. 4, all quite quiet. Quieter still is the return of the distant choir now singing 'Holy, holy, holy'. The other two choirs join in the hushed invocation and the glory of God comes to a blaze in a passage of greater animation and dynamic power. The trumpet, associated with the distant choir, remains, with its simple insistent call—no loud uplifted trumpet this, but one afar off and mysterious.

The last page reverts to Ex. 1 and the soloist, now a tenor, who has been reserved for this single phrase that he may sing the words 'Behold I come quickly, I am the bright and the morning star' in a high clear voice, is answered in a whisper by the chorus 'Amen, even so come Lord'.

Three Short Choral Works for the Leith Hill Festival

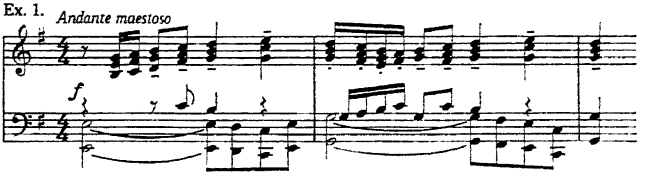
The Hundredth Psalm; Three Choral Hymns; Benedicite

In 1930 the Leith Hill (Dorking) Competition Festival celebrated its twenty-first birthday and Dr. Vaughan Williams, who has directed its destinies and conducted its concerts through the whole of its career until 1953, presented it with three new choral works, one for each 'division' into which the competing choirs are graded: *The Hundredth Psalm* for the lower division of village choirs, *Three Choral Hymns* for the higher, and *Benedicite* for the 'Towns', i.e. the most accomplished singers of all. Each is scored for a normal full orchestra but can be performed with a modified arrangement of the wind parts or in a version for strings and piano.

The Hundredth Psalm

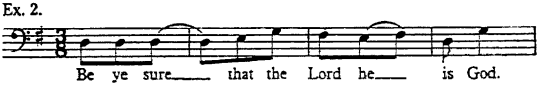
The Prayer Book text of the Psalm is used with the addition of a metrical doxology. The setting is for four-part chorus and no soloists are employed. The structure is extremely simple, consist-

ing of five component sections corresponding to the five verses of the text, the harmony no more 'modern' than that of a late Victorian anthem except for a few false relations. At the same time several of the composer's characteristic idioms declare its authorship, notably the use of triads and a striding bass independent of, and beneath, the vocal basses. These two features are apparent in the opening bars:

Ex. 1. *Andante maestoso*

The voice parts entering a bar and a half later reproduce the rhythm and contour of Ex. 1, suitably modified to fit the words 'O be joyful in the Lord, all ye Lands'. At 'Come before his presence with a song' the movement of the parts becomes homophonic and the instruments are silent for the voices alone. This little section, embracing what we will term the first subject, is repeated immediately (with a different disposition of the parts).

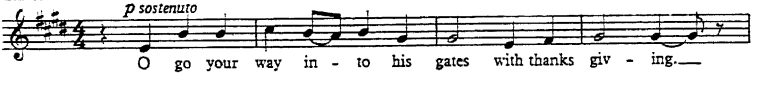
The second verse is a fughetta on

Ex. 2.



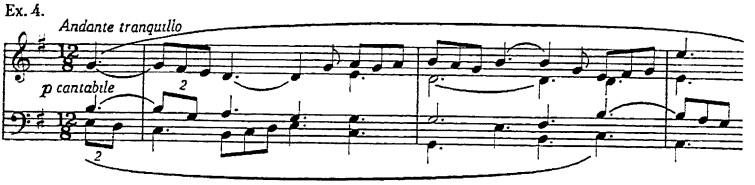
The first subject is now repeated before the time changes to lento, the key of E minor to E major and the voices from counterpoint to unison:

Ex. 3.



The voices get out of step for half a dozen bars of imitational entries but the section ends on a quiet unison. Now comes the most elaborate verse. 'For the Lord is gracious' suggests a pastoral rhythm enhanced by having its triplets set over against duplets in

another part. The instruments begin in three-part counterpoint—slightly suggestive of moments in *Job*:

Ex. 4.

The voices enter in a leisurely manner one by one but as soon as they make more than two-part counterpoint among themselves the texture is kept loose by the orchestra becoming more harmonic in style, and similarly when the voices begin to get into lines of chords the orchestra becomes more fluid. This does not entail however a constant and stable equilibrium: the movement of the parts builds both a climax and an evanescent cadence at the right moments. Ex. 1 is resumed to usher in the Doxology which is sung in unison to the tune of the Old Hundredth, as is fitting. The words are from Daye's Psalter of 1561, the work of William Kethe (they are to be found in the *English Hymnal*), who transferred this famous tune, hitherto assigned by Louis Bourgeois for the use of the Genevan church to Psalm 134, to the words which have been associated with it indissolubly ever since. Dr. Vaughan Williams himself is convinced that it is of folk origin, being probably an amalgam of more than one tune (see *National Music*, p. 143). He made another setting of the Old Hundredth for use at the Coronation on 2 June 1953, which made history by providing the congregation with an official opportunity for active vocal participation in the ceremony. In this setting he used the harmony of John Dowland for one of the verses of the hymn. Dowland's harmonization appeared in Ravenscroft's Psalter of 1621.

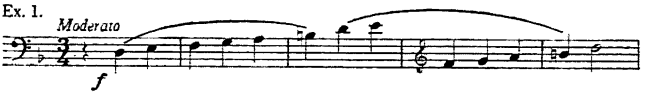
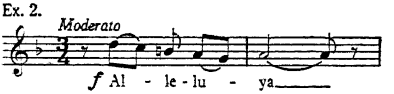
Three Choral Hymns

The three hymns, which are separate but are often performed together as though they were a single work consisting of three variations on a single theme of Christian rejoicing, comprise a

hymn for Easter, a hymn for Christmas, and a hymn for Whitsuntide, all of them settings of words translated from the German by Miles Coverdale (1488–1569), Bishop of Exeter, who was one of the early translators of the Bible into English. All three have a refrain of which much structural use is made: that of the first and third is 'Alleluya' and that of the second 'Kyrie eleison'. There is a solo for a high baritone or tenor in the third hymn and in the Christmas hymn the vocal writing goes into six parts. Otherwise the hymns are for the most part written in straightforward four-part counterpoint with an accompaniment for ordinary full orchestra, though again several simpler alternatives are available.

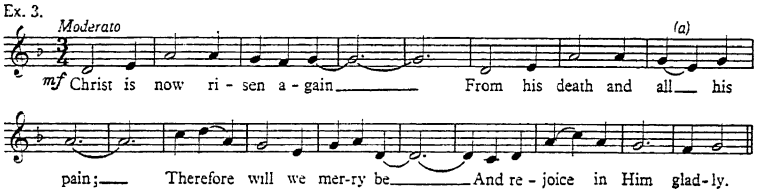
Each hymn has a well-defined structure and indeed shows more obviously than many of his works Vaughan Williams's grasp of form as an element of composition. Everything he does is, of course, planned or it would not hold together, but it often seems as though having something to say he says it and when he has said it stops as though he allowed the form to fit itself to the matter as it went along. In these hymns their formal plan may easily be discerned. One element in it has already been mentioned—the refrain. Others may now be examined in order.

The Easter Hymn is in the Dorian mode. The material of the refrain consists of two scale passages, one ascending, the other descending until the penultimate note which rises to the final:

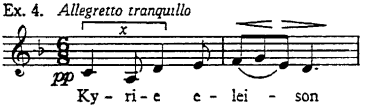
Ex. 1.

Ex. 2.

Ex. 1, it will be noted, avoids its leading note and is indeed a hexatonic scale. The absence of the flattened seventh makes it a little less sombre and more easily kindled into a blaze without becoming commonplacely major when an F sharp is added—the C being still omitted. This is done in the introductory refrain just before the first stanza of the hymn (altos and basses in octaves) begins. These figures are occasionally extended, Ex. 2 for example

by a further descent to E before the rise to A, and both are used plagally as well as in the authentic form in which they first appear, as is necessary in writing for voices singing the same phrase whose ranges are a fifth apart.

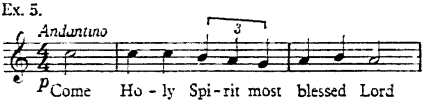
The hymn-tune itself is a good strong tune:

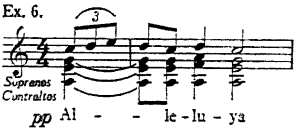
Ex. 3.

The first phrase owes its sturdiness to its compass of a fifth and to its repetition with one tiny but important alteration (*a*) which introduces slurred notes for a touch of grace, a feature imitated in the third and fourth sections. Tonic and dominant are insistent throughout—again a source of strength—until the very end when the fourth of the scale is substituted for the dominant. In the second stanza which is sung a fifth higher by the sopranos and tenors the tune comes naturally to rest a fifth higher—on the tonic. The final form of the tune, which is sung in unaccompanied four-part harmony, is modified, and in spite of a number of naturalized B's leans over heavily towards F major. The final 'Alleluya' returns to Exx. 1 and 2 but is less Dorian in feeling and more a hexatonic D major (i.e. without the leading note)—the signature is two sharps. The music grows more definitely D with every bar. First a C is added—still natural—then a G sharp pulls into A the dominant of D, and in the last two bars we have G contradicted and C sharpened, an honest D major that is saved from being conventional by having its cadence formed over a bass G–D, instead of a mere dominant-tonic A–D.

The Christmas Hymn is appropriately enough in pastoral rhythm and straightforward F major. The germinal phrase is

Ex. 4. *Allegretto tranquillo*

which informs also the tune of the hymn itself. There are seven verses and the swinging rhythm helps the tune to cover the ground more quickly than could a square, congregational type of tune like that of the Easter Hymn. Furthermore the refrain can be combined with the verses which are sung severally in order by sopranos only, by altos only, then by tenors and basses in unison, then by three female voice parts in harmony, and finally by mixed voices in four-part harmony without the accompanying refrain. The final 'Kyrie eleison' reverts to the matter of the opening but operating in the reverse direction from loud to soft. The whole thing has expanded naturally out of the three-note phrase, Ex. 4, *x*.

The Whitsuntide Hymn, which has four stanzas, is again based on two contrasting and combining musical ideas. The soloist begins

Ex. 5.

which shows the type of tune used for the hymn and the equilibrium between the tonalities of C and A (Aeolian) which is maintained alike in the four lines of the hymn-tune and in the refrain:

Ex. 6.

The triplet is important, because when Alleluya is worked in stretto it imparts, so to say, a rolling motion to music which has already been inclined to it by the crotchet triplet in the hymn-tune. The thrust of two against three continually lifts the music into the air. The first two verses are sung by the soloist with an antiphony of the refrain (Ex. 6) after each line—the tenors and basses entering to complete the first verse. The third verse is sung by female voices in four parts with the refrain transferred to the

soloist; the last verse is sung by the full choir and the refrain postponed till the end, which moves decisively into C. Simple and compact, the hymn with its rolling Alleluyas suggests a vista of glory upon glory just as Luther's words

> O holy fyre, and comforth most swete
> Fyle our hertes with fayth and boldnesse

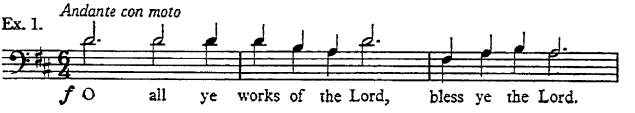
glow with more than their literal meaning. Such is the Pentecostal power of art.

Benedicite

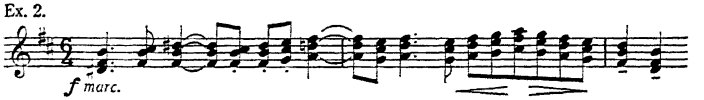
The *Benedicite* is the most elaborate of the three Leith Hill works, but it is a manageable cantata taking about twenty minutes in performance, grateful to sing and effective to hear. It is not surprising, therefore, that after its first performance at Leith Hill in 1930 and a magnificent performance at Queen's Hall under Adrian Boult, when the International Festival for Contemporary Music visited England in July 1931, it was widely taken up, and all the more frequently because its alternative scorings for small orchestra and for strings and piano facilitate performance by ambitious country choral societies of limited resources.

The words are a slightly compressed and modified version of the familiar canticle of the Prayer Book *Benedicite Omnia Opera*, together with a poem by John Austin (1613–69). The music is continuous but is structurally organized in four sections corresponding to two sections of the *Benedicite*, the poem 'Hark my Soul', and a recapitulatory summary of the *Benedicite* (the Works, the Powers, and the Earth). The beginning of the canticle summons the meteorological powers of the universe to the praise of God, after a few bars of introduction in which a simple figure strides over the bar lines and through the orchestra. Their 'praise' theme is announced by male voices:

Ex. 1.

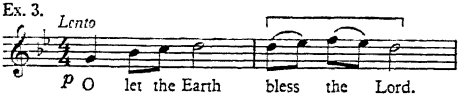


This melodic germ subsequently appears in many forms. A second important 'praise theme' is assigned to the orchestra:

Ex. 2.

This is played over the purposeful tread of the bass instruments by the brass and by the pianoforte, which has a place in the score as a melodic instrument of percussion. It is also used extensively to give a hard edge to the tone of the basses, and it has one very important passage as an instrument of colour to illustrate the doxology of Nights and Days, Light and Darkness. The several ideas—the Waters, the Winds, the Nights, and so on—are not depicted with literal realism, but new figures are introduced at the main changes of idea and appropriate illustration is contributed by the more voluble instruments of the orchestra.

The second section is introduced by an oboe solo, and the soprano soloist takes up the tribute of the Earth and its fruits to their Maker. The seminal motive of this section is the second part of the phrase:

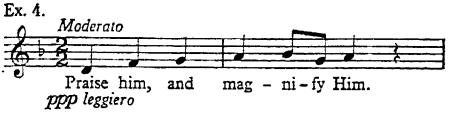
Ex. 3.



The soprano sings above the chorus in G minor and weaves a cantilena in and out of it. The choral writing begins as a unison, then develops into diatonic chords in contrary motion with the tenors and basses who sing in consecutive fifths in the manner much used by Vaughan Williams to give an effect of linear movement. There follows a short unaccompanied section in simple harmony. The entry of the strings in rising scale passages imitated by the voices has a solvent effect and the key begins to change to a bright G major. The voices are again left to themselves singing praises pianissimo with only the oboe continuing its meditation and the drum affirming a cross-rhythm—a rhythm which is the instrumental translation of 'Bless ye the Lord', soon to be actually sung by the chorus. The section ends in a sustained passage

asserting the tonality of A. The signature is that of A major, but the soprano, duly followed by the other voices in imitation, sings a rhapsodic phrase in the pure Aeolian scale, plagal form, i.e. E to E, all natural, except for an alternate sharpening and naturalizing of the F. After some further hesitation between A major and A minor, a hesitation made the more piquant by the addition of the celesta to double the voices, it comes to an end on a bright chord of A major. The composer directs that if a celesta is not available the part must be omitted and must not be transferred to the piano, whose tonal functions, as already described, are specific and quite different from the ornamental effect required in this passage.

The soprano soloist also introduces Austin's poem, but the chorus, still in four parts, breaks in almost immediately pianissimo with the governing motive:

Ex. 4.

The words of the poem and the 'praise' refrain are sung the one against the other by soloist and choir alternately, thus taking up the suggestion contained in the first verse. After a massive homophonic passage the end is a great unison in accordance with the suggestion in the next-to-last verse.

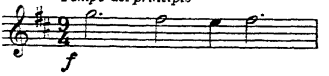
Hark, my soul, how everything
Strives to serve our bounteous King;
Each a double tribute pays,
Sings its part, and then obeys.

Call whole nature to thy aid;
Since 'twas he whole nature made;
Join in one eternal song,
Who to one God all belong.

Live for ever, glorious Lord!
Live by all thy works adored,
One in Three, and Three in One,
Thrice we bow to thee alone.

The final summary is attached to the interpolated poem by a short section of blessing and magnifying founded on:

Ex. 5. *Tempo del principio*

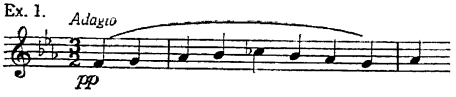
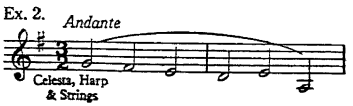


It will be observed how closely related all these diatonic motives are to each other. Exx. 1 and 2 are recalled to summarize the canticle in three comprehensive phrases, thus binding the work still more tightly into a unity by a brief, compressed recapitulation.

Magnificat

It is not only the musical layout but the whole conception—the literary conception, one might almost say—that differentiates this *Magnificat* from those designed for liturgical use. The exultant emotions of the original poem have inevitably been blunted by their general application in a canticle that is sung in the daily service of the Church. It is a song of praise uttered by a woman at one of the great moments of history, and if there was nothing to be said on the other side it would be grotesque that it should be handed over to men and boys in starched surplices. Dr. Vaughan Williams's setting is more than a setting which aims at getting away from a conception blunted by centuries of routine and starched surplices, it is a presentation of the Annunciation from the Virgin Mary's point of view. It is, indeed, a characteristic example of his way of going straight to the heart of a situation with a directness that may be disconcerting but is seen on reflection to be perfectly natural. The layout is for contralto solo, female chorus, and orchestra in which a solo flute has a special part of symbolic significance to play. This *Magnificat* is dedicated to Miss Astra Desmond, by whom it was first sung at the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester in 1932.

It will strike anyone who hears the work or looks at its score that Vaughan Williams has been influenced by his friend Holst,

whose way with mystical words or conceptions was to strike fire out of ice. Here are the swaying chords high up in the gamut which somehow depersonalize music—cf. the *Ode to Death* and 'Saturn' in *The Planets*—by their relentless persistence in steady minims. Through them threads the sound of a flute hovering chromatically like the dove and suggesting the bird messenger also by the coolness of its tone. Voices in unison enter at the third bar and declaim the angel's greeting to Mary (St. Luke i. 28), which is interrupted by a flute cadenza (accompanied). The contralto soloist immediately begins the *Magnificat*, imitating on the word 'magnify' the contours of the flute solo. The chorus, in four parts, again greets Mary—'Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee', &c. Thus ends the first section, with the soloist singing 'For he that is mighty hath done to me great things' and the chorus singing 'Blessed art thou among women' and the orchestra representing the general idea of magnitude. There is a pause and we pass from the idea of greatness to the idea of holiness. For no sooner has the soloist sung 'And holy is his name' than the flute begins a melisma

which is very characteristic of Vaughan Williams for the expression of this kind of feeling. The idea is taken up at once by the chorus, which sings a *Sanctus*. The swaying chords had increased their span in the first section but had never stopped; nor now, though they change their rhythm. They do so, however, as the soloist passes on to the ideas of mercy (a string phrase in unison illumined with a celesta), strength (bare fifths on brass with Indian drum and timpani), and exaltation (a short, restless, staccato figure of three notes). The mercy phrase

is used again (with modification) for the 'remembrance of his mercy', and is developed into a broad climax for the final words of the hymn.

The swaying chords of the opening now return and the chorus takes up the angel's words 'Fear not, Mary', which are sung in unison until the last words, 'And of his kingdom shall be no end', demand harmony and a great orchestral climax. Thus ends the second section; there is a break and the flute is heard once more playing its descending cadenza; Mary sings 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' (St. Luke i. 38). Slow, swaying chords and an arpeggio on the celesta spread serenity, and the chorus ends the vision of the Annunciation by singing 'Hail' on a bright but 'niente' chord of the added sixth.

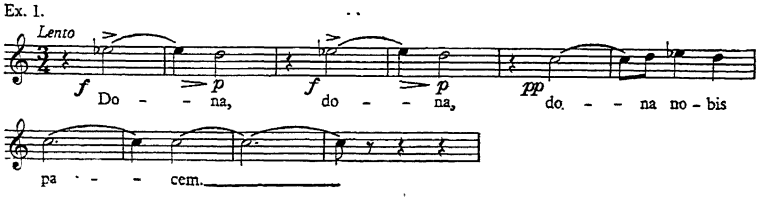
Dona Nobis Pacem

The cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem* was performed for the first time on 2 October 1936 by the Huddersfield Choral Society on the occasion of the centenary of that magnificent choir. Albert Coates conducted and the composer was present. The immediate impression that it made was that, more than most works of art, it was a tract for the times. Vaughan Williams's artistic creed has always been that the composer must not live a life apart, that he must 'cultivate a sense of musical citizenship', that he must not 'shut himself up and think about art, he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community'. No composer can help reflecting the spirit of his generation and environment, but Vaughan Williams is here combating the fallacy that inspiration may be had at second hand by imitating either distinguished foreigners or current fashions. His own music has always shown its derivation from his native soil and the daily life of his own time. But *Dona Nobis Pacem* goes beyond this. The distracted political life of the nineteen-thirties and its overshadowing fear of universal war are not here being used as a quarry for matter subsequently to be turned into art by recollection in tranquillity; rather it called for a pamphlet from a composer who is

aware of the claims of his citizenship. Propaganda and art are sometimes thought to be incompatible, but he would be a bold critic who declared that *The Trojan Women* was not art because Euripides, like Vaughan Williams, was preaching in it a sermon against war. The fact is that the creative process can digest any mortal thing, use any subject-matter including propaganda, if it is intense enough. No doubt a high degree of intensity is required to absorb and integrate completely such strongly purposive matter as moral exhortation or political incitement, but it can do it. The plays of Bernard Shaw show almost every degree of success and failure in this particular aspect of artistic creation.

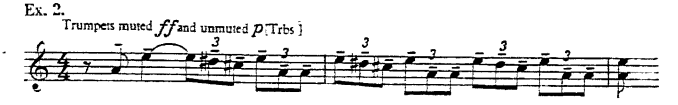
If *Dona Nobis Pacem* fails artistically it is not for its tractarian character but rather because it is not a completely realized unity. It is a compilation of pieces written at two different periods but strung together on the thread provided by the title, 'Give peace in our time, O Lord', which is reiterated incessantly by the soprano soloist. This is not to deny that the central idea is strong enough to unify the component ideas of war, reconciliation, mourning, and the conquest of fear, only to doubt whether the internal balance and proportion are quite what they would have been had the work been designed in its entirety before any of the music was composed. In particular 'The Dirge for Two Veterans', which was sketched as long ago as 1911, is just a little too long and too emphatic on a single facet of the theme of war to fit quite comfortably into the scheme.

The first section is a prayer. The soprano soloist sings the old liturgical words *Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi dona nobis pacem* to an elastic theme of plainsong-like character which is capable of rising from a soft intonation to impassioned drama. The core of it, which is the leading motif of the work, is

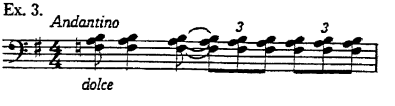
Ex. 1.

The orchestra has two bars' start of the voice, a chromatic progression of 6/4 chords in which there is a latent poignancy enhanced by a false relation with the voice. There is thus early a hint of emotional stress which almost immediately flames up into anguished, discordant appeals from the chorus. This is not a prayer for tranquillity but an urgent call for help against fear. The fear is imminent, for in less than fifty bars the drums are beating.

The second movement thus introduced without a break is a setting of Whitman's 'Beat, beat, drums! blow, bugles, blow'. Whitman's brother was wounded in the Civil War and Walt himself worked in the Military Hospital at Washington while the war lasted. *Drum Taps* was the outcome of these war experiences. 'Beat, Drums' is the third poem in the series and depicts the swoop of war upon the city, its ruthless overriding of all civil activities, the imperiousness of it which is deaf to all other claims, claims of age or youth or weakness; nothing whatever can withstand the clarion call of war. Over the drums the clarion call is reiterated:

Ex. 2.



The words are declaimed by the voices, often in bare fourths doubled at the octave, while the orchestra pounds away relentlessly, sometimes in syncopation, sometimes in imitation of the trumpet call, sometimes in restless repetitions of short figures. The clangour finally dies away, and the drum figure in the course of half a dozen bars changes its shape to an innocuous syncopated accompanimental figure in this predominant rhythm:

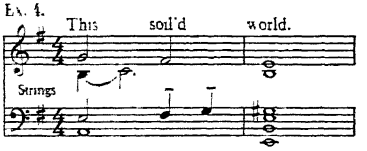
Ex. 3.

The calming effect of this figure is increased by the melody drawn above it, which, starting austerely in the Phrygian mode, is gradually sweetened into E major. The moment when the F in Ex. 3 is sharpened marks the second stage in the healing process; the full

chord of E (with the third doubled for emphasis) opens the way for the baritone soloist to begin the poem *Reconciliation*:

> Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
> Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,
> That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly, softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world.

At the words 'this soil'd world' the composer repeats in root position the plagal cadence which had been the signal for the baritone entry:

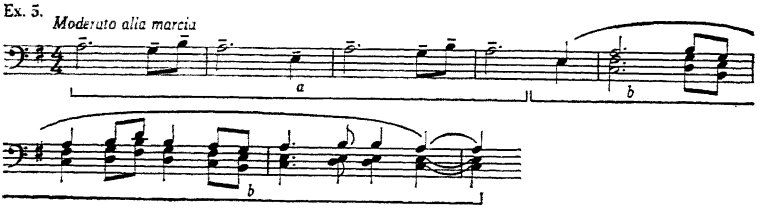
Ex. 4.

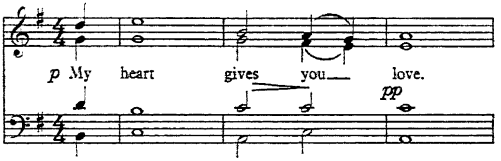


Words and music (suitably expanded) are repeated by the chorus, and the antithesis of mode and key is its decisive feature. The baritone completes the short poem in which the soldier and his dead enemy, 'a man as divine as myself', are reconciled in spirit, after which the chorus again sings of the 'Word over all' and 'this soil'd world', now in eight-part harmony. The last word of all is with the soprano soloist breathing the prayer for peace, Ex. 1.

The fourth section can be detached and sung separately, but there is a Segue in the score at the beginning and end to secure for it the central position in the cantata. It is a setting of 'The Dirge for Two Veterans', and is naturally a funeral march into which the words are fitted without disturbing the steady forward progress of the cortège bearing the bodies of the 'two veterans, son and father, dropped together'.

The march tune is this:

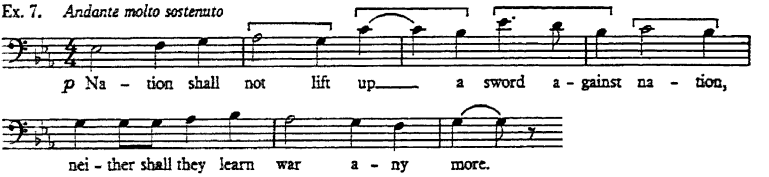
Ex. 5.

and the first verse a choral expansion of it. The second verse (about the moon) is given to women's voices. At the third verse ('I see a sad procession') the four parts sing a new tune beginning in unison but breaking into swaying harmonies at the call of the 'full-keyed bugles'—Whitman apparently knew that the keyed bugle will give a chromatic scale and will certainly permit of the diatonic passage Dr. Vaughan Williams has written here in illustration of its sonorous fanfares. Then the drums are invoked by poet and composer alike. At the words 'And the strong dead-march enwraps me' the voices break off and the orchestra plays fortissimo a broad martial strain in C major recalling for a moment the grandeur of the Dead March in *Saul* but not remaining in the key long enough to resemble it or to interrupt the sequence of the poet's thought. When the voices resume they return to the mood and the figuration of the second verse. The tonal balance now inclines to the flat side, but pulls back again through a strong mixolydian, and momentarily unaccompanied, passage based on D. Finally, the poet recapitulates the scene, the moon giving its light, the bugles their music, and he in turn offers to the veterans the love of his heart in this simple but moving cadence, which may be compared with Ex. 4.

Ex. 6.

Thus the music has come home to A minor, and the march, Ex. 5, is recalled: (*b*) is the first to be literally recapitulated, but (*a*) is heard last of all on the trombone as the march dies away.

With the fifth section the mind is now turned from death towards the positive ideal of peace. But not all at once, though Whitman is now abandoned for John Bright and the Bible. The baritone soloist over the barest possible accompaniment in the bass declaims parlando some words of Bright about the Angel of Death.

The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one as of old . . . to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on.

Upon this the chorus and the soprano soloist break with an almost frantic prayer for peace, *dona nobis pacem*, and to ask with increasing urgency whether there is no help at hand. The answer is found in the Book of Daniel and the baritone soloist delivers the message of comfort and reassurance. Whereupon the whole character of the music changes, and from this theme is evolved an exultant movement (Ex. 7).

Ex. 7. *Andante molto sostenuto*

The square phrase-marks seem to exert a pull against the natural accentuation of the words, so that the music soars as a kite does against the pressure of the wind. Ex. 7 forms the basis of a contrapuntal vocal texture against which the orchestra puts an accompaniment of increasing exuberance, notably a bell-like figure that ultimately summons bells and other instruments of percussion to take part in the triumphal paean. Ex. 7 meantime shows considerable versatility: by altering the time-value or the accentuation of some of its notes it proclaims a new heaven and a new earth in unison, and by changing from four to three time it provides a bass for a *Gloria in excelsis* of great animation. The cantata, however, does not end with bells ringing and voices raised in loud praises but in the softly repeated prayer for peace, Ex. 1, over low-pitched and subdivided chords. Finally, only the soprano voice is left dying away into inaudibility according to the word 'niente' which is found at the end of the majority of Vaughan Williams's scores.

Five Tudor Portraits

There is a story to the effect that it was Sir Edward Elgar who suggested to Dr. Vaughan Williams that he might find a text to his taste and temperament in the poems of John Skelton (1460–1529), attaching to the recommendation a hint that it would give him the opening for a use of jazz. Dr. Vaughan Williams accepted the suggestion and bore the hint in mind when describing the gossip Alice in 'The Tunning of Elinor Rumming'. He found five principal characters for musical delineation: the raffish Elinor, pretty Bess, the cantankerous clerk John Jayberd, the imaginative schoolgirl Jane Scroop, and hearty Rutterkin (a composite personality). These portraits are very early Tudor, for Skelton was a man of twenty-five before the Wars of the Roses came to an end and he died half-way through the reign of Henry VIII. Jayberd is dated—he died in 1506.

Skelton was a man of vigorous personality, for his career was as stormy as his verse is lively. According to Caxton he was 'late created poet laureate in the University of Oxenforde', an honour, probably worth no more than a doctorate, which he also received from Cambridge. He may also have been laureate to Henry VIII, for he was his tutor before he came to the throne. Certainly he was a leading light in the literary world of the time, for Caxton pays a tribute to his skill and command of language as shown by his translation of Cicero's *Letters* and the *History* of Diodorus Siculus 'in polished and ornate terms'. 'I suppose', adds Caxton, 'he hath drunken of Helicon's well.' He was ordained in 1498 but seems to have got into trouble four years later and been imprisoned. However, in 1504 he became rector of Diss in Norfolk and apparently gave up court life and turned to satirizing it. He scandalized his parishioners and fell foul of his bishop; finally, to escape arrest at the hands of Cardinal Wolsey, whom he continually attacked in pamphlet and satire, he took sanctuary in Westminster Abbey where he was kindly received by the abbot and allowed to die in peace. During the rest of the Tudor period his

name became proverbial for farcical jocularity, though many of the stories told of him were no doubt apocryphal. But his quality is apparent: downright yet racy, pungent yet perceptive, copious and robust, clever and outspoken—with each of these traits he is calculated to make an appeal to Vaughan Williams and to evoke responses from his many-sided art.

Five Tudor Portraits is a choral suite drawn from various of Skelton's poems. It is scored for full orchestra, but it is also arranged to facilitate performance for smaller alternative accompaniments. Two soloists, a mezzo-soprano (or contralto) and a baritone, are required. Miss Astra Desmond and Mr. Roy Henderson were the singers at the first performance at the Norwich Festival on 25 September 1936, as at the first London performance at a B.B.C. Symphony concert at Queen's Hall on 27 January 1937. The composer himself conducted at Norwich, Sir Adrian Boult the London performance.

'The Tunning of Elinor Rumming' comes first. It makes an effective opening Allegro of reasonable length—it plays twelve minutes. The lady in question kept an ale-house at Leatherhead, still in existence, called now 'The Running Horse' and bearing Elinor's portrait on its walls. The picaresque ballad is written in short lines averaging six syllables each, rhyming in twos, threes, or fours, but also bubbling with the alliterations of older English verse. The first of its five sections is devoted to a description of 'this comely Jill'. She has a motto:

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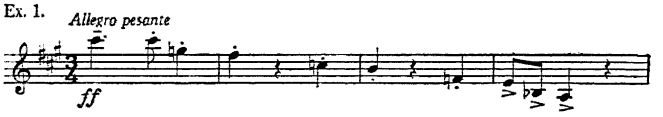

whose tonality is about as straightforward as the lady's moral character ('the devil and she were sib'[1]). This motto, it need hardly be said, is not threaded through the score in any pervasive Wagnerian way. It asserts itself from time to time, just as its nominee put her foot down in her own ale-house, but its rhythm is influential and shapes the opening measures of many

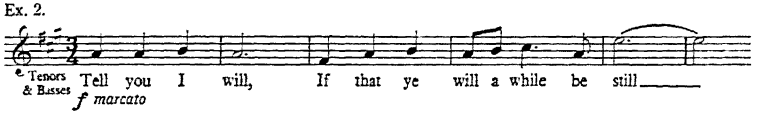
[1] Sib = akin.

a sub-section on voices and instruments. The narrative starts off ballad-fashion:

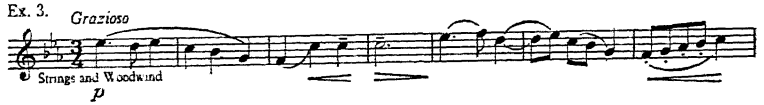
Tell you I will,
If that you will
Awhile be still
Of a comely Jill

with a tune of the once-upon-a-time cut:

Ex. 2.



The time remains in 3/4 for the whole of the first section, but the voices frequently enough step over the bar-lines. The bass keeps up a quick one-two-three, varied by a waltz rhythm, while the orchestra takes to a 'moto perpetuo' of quavers that breaks down finally into a brisk orchestral statement of Ex. 2 as the poet rounds off the first part of his description with the words 'Her youth is far past'. But then he repents and some of her more feminine characteristics are recalled—her clothing, for instance, is described. To this change of mood the composer responds with a quieter tune marked grazioso, Ex. 3.

Ex. 3.

Through all this description no name or address has been attached to the lady. This is now done, after an abrupt break from E flat major to E minor, and the music reverts to Exx. 1 and 2, thus rounding off the first section in ternary form.

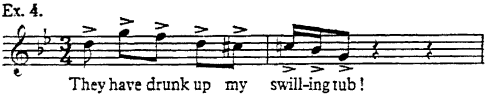
The second section of the narrative deals with the people who resort to her house for the sake of her 'nappy ale', which she sells

To travellers, to tinkers,
To sweaters, to swinkers,
And all good ale drinkers.

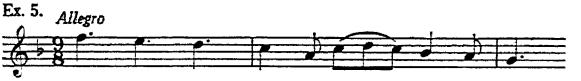
The time is changed to 9/8 and the music passes rapidly through a number of well-defined keys, beginning in B minor, going on

through D minor and G minor (with sevenths mostly flattened), and then, twisting suddenly into C major ('With all their might running') and A major ('To have of her tunning'), it pursues a swift course through F, E flat, C, B flat, and ends in broken fragments of a tune that is related to Ex. 1:

Ex. 4.



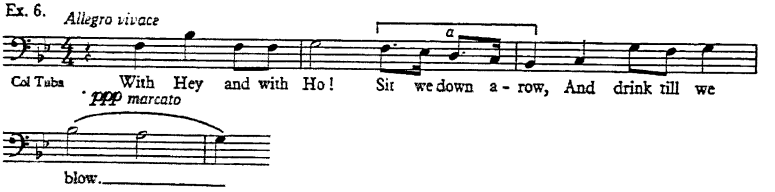
though the theme that has done most of the work of the section is this one:

Ex. 5. *Allegro*

which in suitable modifications suggests not only the volubility of the verse but the haste of the would-be drinkers.

Many of these clients are not good pay and the hostess ejects them. Her next customer is no more profitable, but asks for a free drink of stale ale in return for the gossip she brings. She is introduced by a bassoon cadenza and is personated by the contralto soloist, who has some realistic hiccups and hesitations. Piccolo, muted trumpet and horn, as well as more ordinary wind-instruments, chatter with her, till she finally rolls off to sleep to the crooning of two bassoons in a low register. All of which is, except for the placing of the rests in the vocal line, as hearty and unsubtle as the text.

'Now in cometh another rabble', who start a drinking chorus:

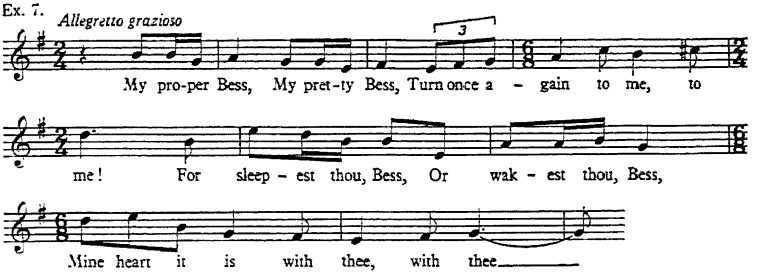
Ex. 6. *Allegro vivace*



The dotted note rhythm of (*a*) is taken up by the orchestra and worked without ceasing to the end of the section. Drums are

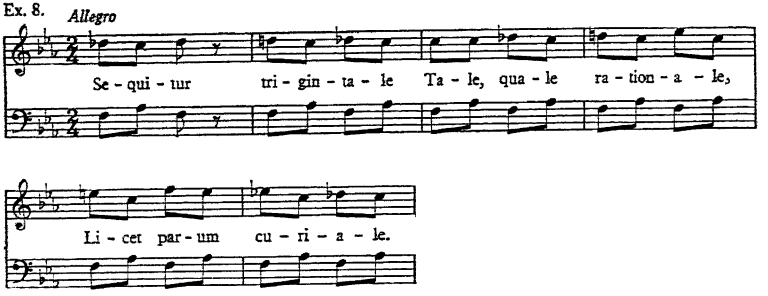
added to give further force to its rollicking progress, and the chorus bellows 'tirley-tirlow' to the climax. Ex. 1 abruptly follows and the poet says his fingers itch because he has written too much, so he makes a speedy end. 'Thus endeth the geste' with a hint of Ex. 2 for the voices and fragments of Ex. 1 thrown to the ground with a clatter by the orchestra.

'Pretty Bess', which follows, is described as an Intermezzo. It is short (four minutes) and purely lyrical. In it the function of the chorus is to echo the baritone soloist, whose love-song it is. After a quiet, lilting little phrase on the oboe, which hovers, as does the whole of the first verse, between G major and E minor, the baritone begins his song:

Ex. 7. *Allegretto grazioso*

The chorus takes up the last line after him with an accompaniment so slight that it fades right out for a bar or two. The oboe phrase introduces the second verse, for which a modulation is made to a mixture of B minor and D major. The chorus echoes the last line of each verse, but the soloist no longer waits for them to finish, but sings his fourth verse while they are echoing the third. The last verse is a repetition of the first, and soloist and choir are still singing quietly and happily together as the harmony closes into G major.

The lively third movement of the suite is a burlesque: it might be regarded as the Scherzo were that term not reserved for the Finale. 'The Epitaph on John Jayberd of Diss' provides a taste of the scorching side of Skelton's tongue. It is a trental (i.e. a commemorative requiem mass—so called either because there were thirty of them or because the commemoration was observed

thirty days after burial) in rhyming, monkish Latin, interrupted with English phrases to enhance its satiric intention with comic incongruity. This John Jayberd—he apparently had other names—was a clerk (presumably in holy, not minor, orders, as he is described as 'sanctus iste pater') and recognized as such by the clergy, but had not the character fitting to that condition—he was double-hearted and double-tongued, a storm-centre of malice and strife. He died in 1506 but the two years that Skelton knew him seem to have been long enough to establish a cordial dislike for him, and the whole poem is an invitation to rejoice at his decease. Men's voices only are employed. The opening bars are an instrumental version of

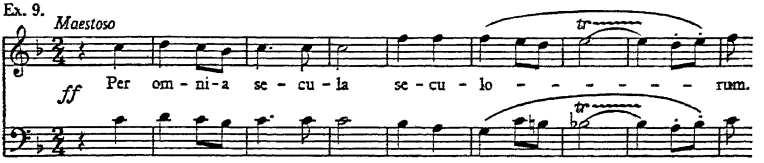
Ex. 8. *Allegro*

which shows the general method of treatment. The pace pulls up at the first English words 'God forgive him his misdeeds', and the time changes to 6/8 with the strong accents marked by a whiff of brass. This is to suggest the drinking-song that is now proposed to celebrate the fact that he is really and truly dead. But the old movement is resumed as the mind reverts to the moral qualities of the departed. Again, when the poet comes back to the fact that

> *Jam jacet hic* stark dead
> Never a tooth in his head,

the music pulls up with a glissando of an augmented seventh followed by a scale passage through the same interval, and turns as before into a kind of acrid C sharp minor. The last section returns to Tempo Primo and a group of tonalities which average

out round C but turn into F for the parody of the sacred office which ends this pre-Reformation skit on the clergy and their ways:

Ex. 9.

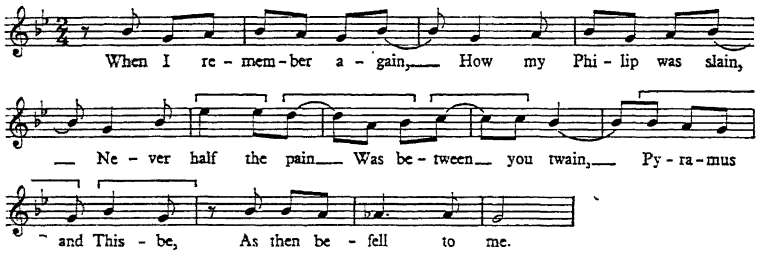


The fourth number, described as a Romanza, is the longest of all and takes over twenty minutes in performance. Its subject is Jane Scroop and the lament she uttered for the death of her tame sparrow, Philip. It is a long poem which, after relating the melancholy facts of the bird's demise at the hands of 'Gib, our cat', elaborates the theme of 'Who killed Cock Robin?' All the birds of the air have their parts assigned to them for Philip's funeral—there is also an instrumental interlude, a bird symphony, provided for their assemblage—and at the end Jane recites portions of the Latin office for the dead.

At first sight the story with its element of exaggeration looks like a mock-heroic, and perhaps the quotations from the Requiem Mass recall by simple association the mockery of the previous 'Epitaph'. Dr. Vaughan Williams does not take this view of it. 'There is no justification, I think, for describing these touching words as a "Parody". Jane saw no reason, and I see no reason, why she should not pray for the peace of her sparrow's soul.' And this view, which he expressed in the programme-book of the B.B.C.'s concert, is supported by a reminder of who Jane Scroop was. She was a little girl at school with the Black Nuns of Carrow, near Norwich. Little girls are sincerely attached to their pets; when they were still younger they played at church or at funerals, and they might very well continue to imitate their elders in the details of the conventual life. In perfect simplicity Jane might bring all the resources of her child mind to an event that loomed large to her. At any rate this is the view which the composer takes of words which show that Skelton had a delicate imagination as well as shrewd observation and forcible expression. It has the advantage from the musical point of view that the element of mockery

can be eliminated, and music is not good at mocking—it can express practically anything but simulate almost nothing. (The hypocrites in *Job* and the crocodile tears in *Gianni Schicchi* are both helped out in their music by stage presentation.)

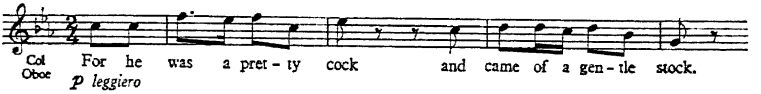
The music opens 'lento doloroso' with a passage for solo violoncello, over which the woodwind sighs. We are to suppose a funeral procession of Jane and her companions bringing the coffin and chanting words from the funeral service. This is given to the chorus (women's voices only), but when Jane begins to speak for herself of her sorrow the mezzo-soprano soloist takes on her words

Ex. 10.

G, A, B flat, the voice goes round and round in unavailing and unconsoled grief, rises in a cry to E flat, and then back again to the same interval of a minor third. Then with the help of the chorus she calls for vengeance on the whole race of cats. After this Jane falls to describing Philip and his pretty ways, and her grief is so far mollified as to permit her to change from G minor to G major. This tender passage harmonized in diatonic sevenths and ninths recalls some of the love-music of *The Poisoned Kiss*, but as the bird's antics when he saw a wasp or an ant are described the time is quickened, the piccolo adds a skittish note, and there are various chirrupings in the orchestra. Then the happy memory is shattered by the wails of the chorus and the funeral music of the opening returns.

Now follows the symphony of birds—the most original writing in the suite. There is a trumpet-call summons and Jane bids come 'All manner of birds in your kind'. For a couple of pages the air is filled with the sound of them gathering together, then the chorus

begins to go through the list, assigning to each what he is to do: the robin redbreast to be the priest and sing the requiem 'with the help of the reed sparrow',—here there is an allusion in the bass to the *Dies Irae*; the popinjay to read the Gospel, the mavis the Epistle; the phoenix to bless the hearse with thurification, and mourners to raise their various voices to the number of a round thirty, all characterized on harp and wind. Philip's own little tune, which was heard when he was first mentioned by name, is now recalled:

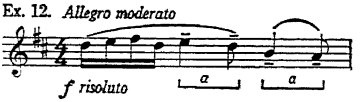
Ex. 11.



The intervals are now less poignant than at its first statement, as befits the more tranquil emotional situation: the body has been committed to the earth, the soul to the mercy of Heaven. The last words are a soft farewell.

The Finale is short (four minutes) and is hardly more than a kick-up to recall the high spirits of the opening and give a brilliant finish to the suite. The text is a combination of the three-verse poem *Jolly Rutterkin* and a song out of the morality play *Magnificence*. The composer justifies his association of the ragamuffin Rutterkin with a gentleman who is 'Properly dressed, all point devise' by the fact that the character who sings the song in the play has immediately before quoted a line of *Jolly Rutterkin*. 'Rutterkin' is derived from 'Rutter', a German cavalry soldier, and hence came to mean a swaggering gallant, a description that covers both characters and serves to make them one.

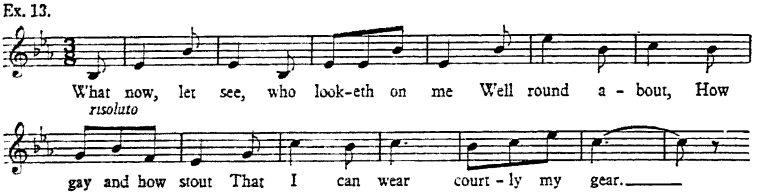
This Scherzo, officially so called, opens with a trumpet-call:

Ex. 12. *Allegro moderato*

and the substance of the music is made out of this by breaking it down into rhythmic figures of various shapes for the accompaniment, by using its appoggiatura motifs (*a*) for 'Hoyda', and by

sounding all the notes together as a sharp, penetrating chord. The chorus opens with the refrain

Hoyda, Jolly Rutterkin, hoyda!
Like a rutter hoyda.

The baritone soloist sings the words of the second song, lightly accompanied except for the interjections of the refrain by the chorus:

Ex. 13.

In more than fifty bars there is not an accidental to weaken the downright vigour and simplicity of this hexatonic tune and its wholly congruent accompaniment. A passing A♮ slips into one of the choral interjections, but its effect is momentary and the tune with its choral imitations rattles on after that for another twenty bars without a single other allusion to that one foreign note in the gapped mode so consistently employed. A page or two of the earlier music based on Ex. 12 rounds off the movement in ternary form and brings the suite to its end on a robust note.

There is nothing new of a technical nature in this suite, except perhaps the Bird Symphony. One catches occasional reminders of *Sir John in Love* and other earlier works where passing moods or expressions evoke the same kind of treatment. But, as always with Vaughan Williams, the work as a whole marks an advance into new country. Skelton's temper embraces shades of feeling that have not before found expression in Vaughan Williams's music. Its cheerful secularity is something new outside his stage works. It is playful in character and brilliantly successful in performance. The ruminative note is absent, but its animation finds adequate relief and contrast in the lyrical portions. It has caught the bursting vitality and the gaiety of Tudor England. It is one more testimony to the rich humanity of the composer's mind and to his astonishing versatility.

Fantasia on the Old 104th Psalm Tune

The Fantasia on the Old 104th Psalm Tune is an experiment, not wholly successful, in form. It is in essence a set of variations for piano solo with orchestral accompaniment and choral obbligato. Its only analogue is Beethoven's Choral Fantasia, in which he anticipated his own Choral Symphony. It was written for the Gloucester Festival of 1950, where the solo part was played by Michael Mullinar with Dr. Herbert Sumsion as conductor. Its first London performance was at the St. Cecilia Festival at the Albert Hall in the following November.

The piano writing is not very grateful, being rather thick and dwelling for considerable stretches in the lower octaves of the keyboard. The balance between choir and piano has proved difficult to strike in practice, since the piano part tended to disappear when there was much movement in the vocal parts. At the second performance some of the piano writing in the last variation was cut in order to relieve the texture where it was most opaque. There are seven variations in all, of which two are for piano alone; in the other five the chorus sings verses 1 and 2 and verses 31, 32, and 33 of Psalm CIV. There is an Introduction in which the piano evolves the tune out of its chief motif of four notes. The theme is then stated by the piano alone in very full, if not very orthodox, harmonies.

The tune, commonly sung to 'Disposer supreme', comes from Ravenscroft's Psalter of 1621,

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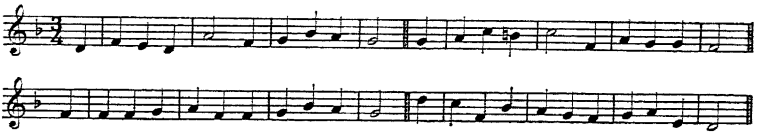
and is said to be not a Genevan but an English tune, possibly Ravenscroft's own and certainly harmonized by him. The words

are in the metrical version of Sternhold and Hopkins (*c.* 1550) according to which the second verse runs:

> With light as a robe Thou hast Thee beclad,
> Whereby all the earth Thy greatness may see.
> The heavens in such sort Thou so hast spread
> That they to a curtain compared may be.

In the first variation to the first verse of the Psalm the choir has a version of the tune ornamented with little four-note flourishes over simple harmonies in quaver motion, while the piano plays an even more highly ornamented version of the tune and the orchestra a much simpler harmonization. In the second variation for piano alone the writing is varied freely from line to line of the tune, beginning with the romantic type of arpeggio in the left hand, going on to parallel sixths, thence to ornamental triplets in the right hand and so on in a free, quasi-improvisatory manner. In the third variation the chorus sings the tune in unison while the piano continues the same sort of writing though with fatter chords. Variation four is a fugato for voices without piano, until it too is given an entry in heavy double octaves. The fifth variation is in the style of a cadenza for piano alone. In variation six the voices are again in unison while the orchestra carries the harmonies and the piano, with hands encompassing the extremes of the keyboard, plasters it all with great chords. In the seventh and last variation the voices sing flowing counterpoint which is largely doubled by the orchestra, and the piano silenced (in the revised version) until the final paean.

This is not a major work but it sets the bells ringing with that diatonic play round a few notes of the scale which seems to be Vaughan Williams's personal secret.

An Oxford Elegy

The first performance of *An Oxford Elegy* was given with inevitable propriety in Oxford. It was sung, recited—what is the word for it?—in the hall of Queen's College on 19 June 1952,

when Sir Steuart Wilson was the Speaker. It was repeated at the composer's birthday concert at Dorking in the following autumn, when Cecil Day Lewis, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, was the Speaker. The Speaker is the soloist in what is otherwise a choral work with small orchestra (flute, oboe, cor anglais, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, and strings). The words which he declaims, sometimes unaccompanied but more usually against a background of the orchestra or of wordless chorus, are taken from Matthew Arnold's two poems, at once topographical, philosophical, and elegiac, *The Scholar Gypsy* and *Thyrsis*. The composer has abridged them to make one continuous text. The music is a recasting of an attempt made to set the poems half a century earlier.

The choice of a reciter rather than a light baritone to intone the poems is the composer's final solution of the problem presented by the poems. Problem there must be, for it is strange that in a hundred years no composer had been stimulated to set words with so strong a pull on the heart-strings, so characteristic of their time in their ethos. Perhaps Parry was too robustly optimistic in temperament to tackle their gentle pessimism, but their agnosticism should have tempted him, not to mention their topographical significance, which is an equally important ingredient in their wistful, insistent appeal.

The conjunction of the speaking voice with music is never satisfactory for the listener, who perforce must try to be attentive on two different planes at once. Yet it constantly tempts composers to use it in situations where words are necessary but singing is ill-suited to their purpose because it is too slow and not sufficiently dry in sound. Singing is such a business and singers make such a business of it. A voice, even a male voice, trying to lay upon a fully saturated stream of musical tone a long narrative or a philosophical disquisition—*The Scholar Gypsy* is both—would spoil the gentle movement of Arnold's words and it would interfere with their sense. And so the speaking voice is the chosen vehicle, though *Sprechstimme* would be better. What seems to be needed is a kind of recitative very lightly voiced and deliberately unmelodious as far as pitch intonations are concerned. Such would avoid the unaccommodating antithesis of speech and

musical tone. There are however in the Elegy passages, notably those evocative of summer fields and flowers or of winter cold, where this ill-sorted marriage seems happy.

The composer's intention is to distil in music the chief elements of Arnold's two Oxford poems, which seem eminently fitted for musical treatment. Mr. Ernest Newman, in an article[1] tinged with unusually frank devotion to the poems, suggests that they ought to have done for some English composer what Hölderlin did for Brahms in the *Schicksalslied*. Brahms was more of a stoic than Arnold, but the *Angst* of the nineteenth century, different from our own because cushioned with peace and prosperity, ran to melancholy pessimism or idealistic disillusionment, and it is easy to see what Mr. Newman means, and also perhaps why it is that he himself finds Arnold so congenial. Following this line of thought he goes on, in an examination of what Vaughan Williams has done to the text of the two poems by way of omission, transposition, and change of emphasis, to express the respectful view that Vaughan Williams has deliberately distorted Arnold's thought in order to bring into greater prominence for his own purposes Arnold's emotion for Oxford. The choice of title is confirmation that there is something in this idea.

So much of the music exhales a ruminative melancholy expressive of Arnold's mental attitude to life that one may question whether Vaughan Williams is after all very wide of the mark, though Mr. Newman's is a point of substance. 'Oxford qua Oxford plays a larger part in his imaginative scheme than it does in Arnold,' he writes. True enough, but the topography and the philosophy are so inter-engaged—the amalgam is indeed the main source of the emotional appeal of the poems—that you cannot have one without the other. The Scholar Gypsy, that figure from Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661) whom Arnold took to serve as his symbol of the quest for truth, does in an extraordinary way represent one of the mysteries of Oxford—the 'secret which none can utter' of another poet. Youth pours through the university seeking truth in the rigour of learning, and then in its leisure goes off into the Berkshire Hills and to the Upper River,

[1] *The Sunday Times*, 12 April 1953.

where it finds the simple life and meets the *genius loci*. It is in youth that the appalling facts of life and death, the heights and depths of human destiny, first break upon the expanding mind, and whatever other philosophies, Christian, Stoic, or Nietzschean, are drawn on to counteract the shock, the young mind becomes adult in a way that Arnold portrays with an unerring psychology.

I hesitate to obtrude a paragraph in the first person singular in a book which has consistently tried to discuss music in the most objective way that its subject-matter permits, but I have known Oxford and Arnold's poems from boyhood and I recognize in them, as I did long before I knew anything about Arnold's qualified pessimism, the authenticity of the poems' feelings and doctrine. The feeling and the doctrine are one. The thought is of the kind that one thinks with the heart as much as the brain—as his critics did not fail to point out. I have known the Scholar Gypsy's haunts from childhood, the Wytham flats and the three lone weirs, of which one, no longer a weir but a footbridge, is only a mile downstream from my home in the country. Arnold's evocations of these places express for me the thought of the poem, and the thought of the poem, I perceive, is influenced by the *genius loci*. If Parry had set the poems he would have concentrated on the 'unconquerable hope' and the 'inviolable shade'; Vaughan Williams leaves them out altogether. Vaughan Williams is more mystic, or seer, than Parry, who was more of a thinker. If Vaughan Williams was to get to the heart of the poems it would be by way of those evocations of field and tree and river, and not, as it would have been by Parry, through the method of the ethical cantata in splendid choral part-writing. Much of Vaughan Williams's choral writing is wordless.

The method then is justified, whatever criticism may have to say of the quality of the music, or of the success of the piece as a work of art.

Since most of the words are entrusted to the Speaker most of the music is orchestral commentary on them, pastoral in character and rhythm, rather emotionally chromatic in substance, without formal thematic coherence. The choir has besides its instrumental use only two short passages in the *Scholar Gypsy* part of the text:

in one it echoes the Speaker's description of 'all the live murmur of a summer's day' and the other is an even briefer dilation on the 'dreaming spires'. In the *Thyrsis*, which is the more elegiac part of the text, the choir has another evocative passage of place and time which sharpens the poignancy of Thyrsis' death—Thyrsis was Arthur Hugh Clough, Arnold's Oxford friend. And then the final bid for resignation, courage, and even hope brings it its most substantial music. In this matter Vaughan Williams has reversed Brahms's procedure. In the *Schicksalslied* the text is without hope but Brahms rounds off his cantata with an orchestral postlude that virtually gives the lie to all that has gone before. *An Oxford Elegy* ends with the singing in firm harmony of the words

Our scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

Occasional Works

Introduction

In his artistic credo of 1912 [1] Vaughan Williams wrote 'Have we not all about us forms of musical expression which we can take and purify and raise to the level of great art?' And he instances the music-hall, children in the street, the Salvation Army, community singing at football matches, and a high festival at St. Paul's Cathedral as sources of inspiration. In consonance with this faith he has always been willing to write occasional music.

It is the way of occasional music often to outlive its occasion—one might point to Bach's church cantatas as a conspicuous instance. But whether it lives or dies after the day of its birth, occasional music has at any rate one paradoxical source of vitality—it imposes limitations, limitations of resources, of subject, of form. The doctrine of limitations in aesthetics is paradoxical in the sense that fetters become the instrument of freedom. The classical example is the sonnet form: the poet is bound by his verse form and his rhyme scheme, and if he was not it would not be a sonnet that he was writing but something else, which would not have the characteristic beauty of a sonnet. There is in the creation of a work of art an element of struggle with, and conquest of, recalcitrant material, and if this struggle has not taken place the result is too facile to merit the high title of art. Brahms, confronted with the idea of transcribing for the piano Bach's Chaconne for violin solo, realized that to write out the harmonies for two hands was too easy, that part of the essence of the Chaconne was being too big for its medium, that to put what was bursting out of its envelope into the immensely larger vessel of a seven-octave pianoforte was to let the essence evaporate. So he transcribed it for left hand alone so as to equalize by this handicapping the struggle of form and content, which is the vital artistic factor in Bach's original

[1] Republished in Hubert Foss's *Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Harrap, 1950.

conception. The composer therefore who undertakes to write a choral suite for choirs of limited capacity, a concerto grosso for a string band containing many beginners, a cantata for chorus and orchestra designed for singers and players still at school, is by his handicap stimulating his imagination to the task of struggle with and conquest of material that is for once in a way recalcitrant not by its magnitude but by its very simplicity.

Between 1949 and 1951 Vaughan Williams produced three such works for special festive occasions being observed by amateur musicians of severely limited technical powers—Women's Institutes Choirs, Rural Music Schools, and the Schools Music Association. All had their first performances in the Albert Hall under Sir Adrian Boult, who shares the composer's feeling of obligation to, and delight in, amateur music. They were *Folk-Songs of the Four Seasons*, first performed on 15 June 1950, Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra, first performed on 18 November 1950, and *The Sons of Light*, first performed on 6 May 1951.

There are however grand as well as humble occasions requiring music and for them too Vaughan Williams has composed special pieces. The most transitory of this group is the *Flourish for a Coronation* which was performed at a Philharmonic concert at Queen's Hall on 1 April 1937 in honour of the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. It is an affair of unisonal and imitational writing for a chorus with melismatic exuberances, of trumpet fanfares, of organ and tramping basses and even of loud shouts. The words come from the Bible (Kings i and Chronicles ii and Psalm cxxxvi), from Chaucer and from the Agincourt Song (v. 2). The passage of Chaucer beginning

> O Prince, desire to be honourable,
> Cherish thy folk and hate extortion.

is set to a fine hymn-like tune and is sung first by tenors and basses in unison and then in four-part diatonic harmony. This is made of durable material but the rest of the short cantata is purely occasional. It was not revived in 1953 for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

The Serenade to Music was written for a specifically musical occasion—Henry Wood's jubilee in 1938—and has found permanent usefulness. *Thanksgiving for Victory* was commissioned by the B.B.C. for broadcasting at the end of the war when the time came. It has been renamed *A Song of Thanksgiving* to fit it for more general use and it has been recorded.

Serenade to Music

The Serenade to Music has to be regarded as a choral work although it was specifically written for solo voices. Those voices, sixteen in number, are actually specified in the score—composers have often written with particular performers in mind, but this instance must surely be unique, in which the thematic material seems to have been shaped to the timbre of an individual voice with as much or even more of 'registration' as is normally applied to the assignation of a tune to oboe, clarinet, or horn. But then, the occasion was unique—the jubilee of Henry J. Wood, the conductor, who was the chief single force in democratizing orchestral music in Britain. The Serenade was composed for and dedicated to him on the occasion of his jubilee, which was celebrated on 5 October 1938. Wood in his time accomplished a vast amount of work outside the Promenade Concerts on which his fame principally rests. He conducted festivals, both choral and orchestral, and was a 'guest artist', as the rather absurd phrase goes, on many occasions under the aegis of all the important musical organizations in the country at one time or another. On these occasions he was associated with all the principal British oratorio (and some opera) singers of the day, and they in their turn were pleased and honoured to be associated by Vaughan Williams in this remarkable tribute from a composer to an executant.

The singers at the jubilee concert at the Albert Hall on 5 October 1938 were Isobel Baillie, Stiles Allen, Elsie Suddaby, Eva Turner (sopranos), Margaret Balfour, Muriel Brunskill, Astra Desmond, Mary Jarred (contraltos), Parry Jones, Heddle Nash, Frank Titterton, Walter Widdop (tenors), Norman Allin, Robert Easton,

Roy Henderson, and Harold Williams (basses). The composer adds this note to his score: 'For subsequent performances of this work, when the above singers (indicated by their initials in the score) are not available, other singers will have to take their places. Four soloists will be sufficient, or all the parts may be sung in chorus.'

The Serenade to Music, then, was very much an occasional piece, but its ravishing strains could not be discarded when the occasion was past, and so like many another occasional piece it has survived to an independent existence, and, more remarkably, to prove to be the right work for other occasions, most notably the revived festival of St. Cecilia. When music's own praise is being sung, the Serenade to Music takes its place alongside the St. Cecilia Odes of Purcell and Handel as the right music for those occasions.

The words are taken from *The Merchant of Venice*, Act V, Scene 1, beginning 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank' down, with some omissions, to 'Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion And would not be awak'd'. The principal omission is Lorenzo's description of the effect on a wild and wanton herd of colts hearing 'a trumpet sound, or any air of music touch their ears'. When Shakespeare spoke of music in this passage he did what is virtually impossible—he fixed in words all the heart-easing qualities of the most volatile of the arts. Vaughan Williams has made a further distillation and presents us with the essence of music in music. Its peculiar sweetness seems to find expression mainly by the harmonic use of soft discords—it has even been likened to Delius. There is, as always, much triadic harmony, but the triads often have an added note, and passing notes in inner parts make glancing dissonances as they pass. The first two bars show the sort of thing: a tonic chord passes to a chord of the ninth on a sub-dominant, the dominant is consistently avoided, and thirds pile up:

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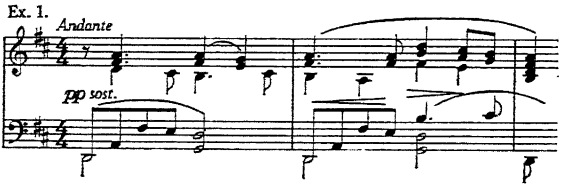
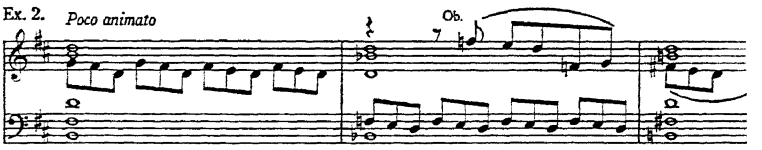
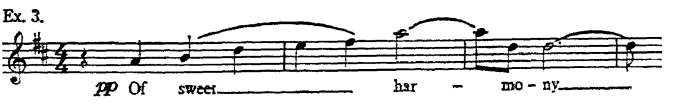

The scoring here is for harp, strings and clarinet, and a violin solo. This nocturnal music recurs. There is a second idea announced during the course of the short orchestral prelude, an idea later associated with the patines of bright gold rotating in angelic harmony.

Ex. 2. *Poco animato*

These two ideas are repeated when the voices enter. The voices make their entry tutti but when Ex. 2 comes up for verbal elaboration the tenor singers carry on the melody till the words 'such harmony is in immortal souls' demand full harmony in eight parts once more, a harmony in which G major and B flat major are juxtaposed.

The third main idea is a fanfare, with the calls overlapping in Vaughan Williams's characteristic way. This is to wake Diana with a hymn. A plaintive section follows for solo voice to 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music', but the fanfares return when the music from Portia's house is heard. This is the D major music that grows out of Ex. 1, and it is again followed by the triplet motion and the woodwind solos of Ex. 2, for once more the subject is the night, the moon's sleep this time rather than the starshine. The final section is the main music of Ex. 1, which gives to the whole piece, cantata one must call it though it is like none other of the species, the form of a large and irregular rondo. It ends pianissimo with a bottom D for the lowest bass, after the soaring phrase, that came as cadence figure at the end of the exposition, the phrase ever to be associated with Isobel Baillie's voice by those who heard her:

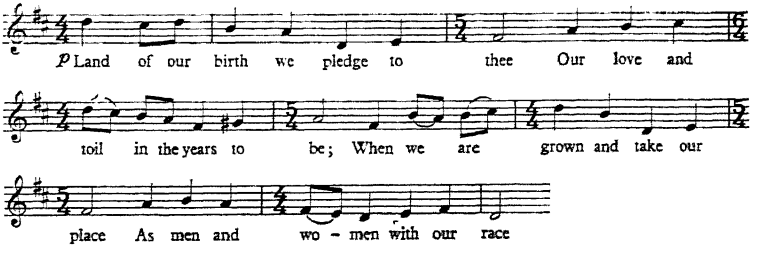
Ex. 3.

A Song of Thanksgiving

A Song of Thanksgiving (originally entitled *Thanksgiving for Victory*) is the natural complement of *Dona Nobis Pacem*, which provides the context (see p. 165) for some discussion of the aesthetics of this matter. It also forms a link in the historical chain of commentary on public affairs that begins in the Fourth or 'Fascist' Symphony, in which the nakedness of force in world politics is shown for what it is, that continues in *Dona Nobis Pacem*, the tract for those times of mounting tension, and finishes in the Sixth Symphony, a description and prophecy of war.

A Song of Thanksgiving was commissioned for broadcasting on the day of Germany's surrender in 1945. It had a concert performance on the last night of the Proms (September 15) that season and was subsequently heard in Norwich Cathedral on a royal occasion (17 January 1946), where its fittingness to complement Elgar's *For the Fallen* in future Armistice celebrations was established. The vocal score contains some instructions about the way its unusual disposal of forces is to be regulated. There is a part for a Speaker, who has a passage of Shakespeare and several excerpts from the Book of Isaiah to declaim not only against an instrumental but also against a choral background. This is a microphone technique and requires careful adjustment in concert performance to ensure the predominance of the Speaker's words. On the other soloist's part the composer prescribes that 'the soprano part should be sung by a powerful dramatic voice, but there must be no *vibrato*'. (Is such a combination of opposite requirements really possible?) 'On no account should the part be sung by a single boy's voice, though in the case of necessity it may be sung by several boys' voices in unison.' In other words it is a clarion call with words. Another note demands the raw tone of childish piping in the children's semi-chorus and not the sophisticated fluting of choir boys. The work is scored for large orchestra with six trumpets and six clarinets but there is extensive cueing in to enable it to be performed in all sorts and conditions of place and circumstance. For

the substance of the music is sufficiently simple to allow choirs of modest attainments to undertake it.

The text is taken from *The Song of the Three Holy Children* in the Apocrypha—the words of Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego in King Nebuchadnezzar's oven—from Shakespeare (*Henry V*, Act IV, Scene 8), from the Books of Chronicles and Isaiah, and from Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*. The cantata falls into three parts marked by the main ideas contained in the grouped texts. The first, which opens with a fanfare and its adaptation to the solo voice, is a thanksgiving founded on the idea *Non nobis Domine*. The middle section which makes some use of minor keys is confined to the words of Isaiah. The third part, opening with a broad, diatonic, hymn-like tune first sung by the children's semi-chorus, is a setting of Kipling's 'Land of our birth we pledge to thee, Our love and toil in the years to be':

Ex. 1.

This tune begins in the vein of 'O we can wait no longer' in the Sea Symphony—the idealistic urge is the common factor. It modulates to the dominant like a conventional hymn-tune and unlike a typical folk-song. It is taken up by the chorus with points of imitation and quaver motion to give it greater impetus and thence to a great unison of all available voices against the harmony of the orchestra. But even that dies away and the final benediction is sung by the soprano solo (with a softly echoing trumpet) at the end wholly unaccompanied. So hard does Vaughan Williams find it to write any but a fading end to a composition, even if it be a thanksgiving for victory.

The use of the spoken voice with musical tone is always doubtful in effect because it puts the utterance on two planes. Melodrama as in *Fidelio* can by the very shock of the intrusion of speech upon a musical texture be dramatically effective. Elgar's *Carillon* in the same way stirred the heart with its original words. Honegger's *King David* is an experiment on a larger scale, as also is Bliss's *Morning Heroes*. What Vaughan Williams has done in *A Song of Thanksgiving* is to go a step further and put the speaking voice not only against an orchestral accompaniment but against a choral chant (cf. *An Oxford Elegy*, p. 185), which in the middle section actually echoes the speaker's words. The aesthetic purpose is less to seek an extension of musical resources than to emphasize the ceremonial character of the cantata. It is not a concert work but a public celebration. It is music engaged in a social service. The broad diatonic character of the tunes, though not for congregational use, is witness to the social impulse behind its composition.

Folk-Songs of the Four Seasons

Besides the paradox of the difficulty of being simple there is another paradox to be faced in the first of these occasional works of the Festival of Britain period: it is the ethics and aesthetics of arrangement. No one has ever been able to work out high general principles of artistic morality on which transcriptions and arrangements can be justified or condemned. The reduction of the orchestral part for piano in a vocal score has the justification of utility and is not criticized artistically, but if the utility argument is excluded, such as applies also to piano duet arrangements of symphonies or of Bach's organ chorale preludes, it is extremely difficult to reach any valid general principle beyond the unhelpful statement that each case must be judged on its merits. In the case of folk-song there is an initial objection that any sort of accompaniment or polyphonic treatment is out of place, since the main feature of folk-song is its monody, its absence of harmonic implication, its unidimensional line. Plainsong gave way to the

polyphony that evolved out of it, but folk-song remains, in Ernest Walker's searching phrase, 'the sole artistic protest against artistic culture that history knows'. Yet everybody who has ever had any intimate contact with folk-song, the early collectors, the later scholars, the American specialists (who resist the piano but adopt the guitar), Chappell, Lucy Broadwood, Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams, E. J. Moeran, while conforming to the pure doctrine of folk-song's self-sufficiency, yet make their own accompaniments and arrangements.

But not all arrangements are equally good, and people are not always agreed as to which arrangements are good or bad, and still less on what principle that good or bad can be decided. Thus we are back at the general difficulty of all transcription. But we can take note of one historical fact and of one proposed formula. Every generation, it seems, makes its own settings to accord with its taste. Chappell brought in MacFarren to harmonize in simplest text-book style the tunes in *Popular Music of the Olden Time*. Lucy Broadwood had a refined taste that improved on MacFarren but did not go much further than simple setting. Sharp was bolder and wrote real accompaniments. Vaughan Williams fertilized his own musical style by folk-song and repaid the debt with an inexhaustible resource in finding the right treatment for the hundreds of folk-songs he has set in one form or another at one time or another. Moeran set them like Delius. Britten has now applied his ingenious mind to the coining of new figural accompaniments to old songs.

Vaughan Williams's own formula for the way to set a folk-song is that it must be 'done with love'. This does not go much beyond the phrase 'each on its merits', for you can only recognize love by the same intuitive judgement as that by which you judge merits. However 'love', unless it be love at first sight, does imply long acquaintance, and if you live with folk-song long enough you learn to know it in its inmost nature and are so less likely to commit outrages on it. Love at first sight however is not a complete safeguard against unfeeling settings: many people find Britten's settings only half happy. His mind has been too quick, and his taste in this matter therefore is that of the impetuous lover whose fancy

has been caught. Worst of all are those casual flirts who pick up a folk-song and hope to 'make something of it'.

Vaughan Williams's settings are all made with love, with the paradoxical result that the more personal his settings the more they enhance the native quality of the tune. There is, it seems, no need to be colourless or self-effacing in setting a folk-tune; if love and respect are in it there need be no limit to the amount of individuality that may be brought to the partnership of personal and communal creation. By a happy paradox each enhances the other and neither loses its independence.

In *Folk-Songs of the Four Seasons* Vaughan Williams once more demonstrates what love can do and how the limitation to female voices can be turned to new and positive account. He uses unison, two-part and three-part harmony with and without accompaniment, unison with descant, and unison with two-part semi-chorus. He envisaged a large choir, of which the majority were singers who could only be relied on for a good unison weight of tone, a semi-chorus capable of part-singing, and a small number only who could manage an unaccompanied trio. Many of the choirs found even the modest demands made of them in the matter of part-singing difficult enough to manage in a winter's work and there were eliminating contests in every district to decide what choirs should go to the concert at the Albert Hall and make up the chorus of more than 3,000 voices. The effect of so many voices singing with simple sincerity melody that was bone of their bone, composed into a cantata specially for English women dwelling in the English countryside, by a composer who more than any other has steeped himself in our native traditions, was extraordinarily moving.

In a note to the programme on the occasion of this 'National Singing Festival' Vaughan Williams wrote:

> When I undertook to write a Folk Song Cantata for the Women's Institutes I set my mind to work to find some unifying idea which would bind the whole together. It was not long before I discovered the necessary link—the calendar. The subjects of our folk-songs, whether they deal with romance, tragedy, conviviality or legend, have a background of nature and its seasons.

The resulting cantata can in fact be used whole at any time, seasonally in quarters, or separately song by song according to the resources available anywhere at any time.

There is a prologue consisting of the folk-song 'To the Ploughboy' sung by all voices with a descant for semi-chorus over a vigorous orchestral (or piano) accompaniment. The song is one of Dr. Vaughan Williams's own collection and was taken down in Sussex in 1904. The special point of putting the song here at the beginning is that in it the ploughboy is invited not merely to survey the operations of agriculture but to 'help me to sing'. 'Let's sing, sing, sing and be merry withal.'

Spring

The first of the constituent cantatas contains three songs of spring. The first is a love song, 'Early in the spring', set for three voices unaccompanied. Few harmonic progressions are involved and they go round and round until they blossom into a melismatic cadence at the end of the simple story. Here is the romance against the background of the calendar of which the composer wrote in his note.

The second of the spring songs is 'The Lark in the Morn' from the composer's own East Anglian collection but differently harmonized in 1950 from 1905, with a figuration that gives a gentle waltz lilt to the song. The tune is not the same as the one collected by Cecil Sharp to the same words, which are incidentally only fragmentary as they stand but exist in a fuller form on broadsides, which means that the song had a town as well as a country circulation in the eighteenth century. The setting is for two voices with a rather ingenious accompaniment in which two different figures are combined.

'May Song', for full chorus (unison) and semi-chorus descant accompanied, turns to something robust after the lyrical delicacy of the first two songs of spring. It makes use of two tunes used in alternation and in what can only be called telescopation. The first is the traditional may-song, which Vaughan Williams had already used in *Hugh the Drover*.

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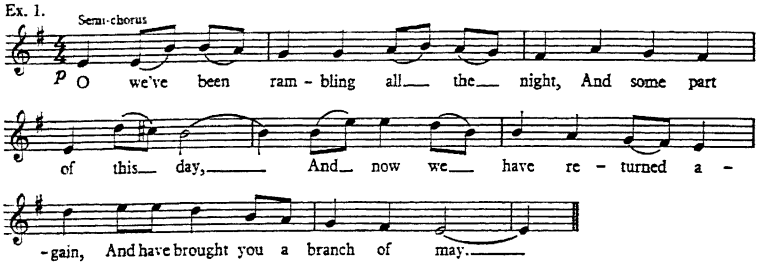
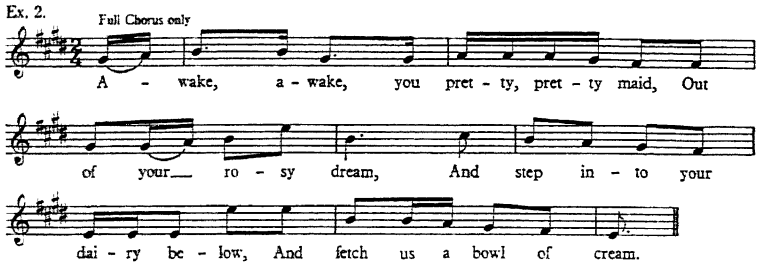

The second, which occupies the middle section and turns from E minor to E major, is taken from *English County Songs*, where it appears under Lucy Broadwood's initials as a tune from Hertfordshire.

Ex. 2.

The words of this seasonal may-song show, like those of the Christmas carol 'The Holly and the Ivy', traces of several trains of thought. The song is essentially religious, but of pagan derivation. The may, like the holly, is a manifestation of the vegetation spirit, but Christian theology has been attached to it with the puritan *memento mori* that affected carols in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is also a *quête* song—if the bowl of cream is not forthcoming then a mug of beer is called for. It is also a ritual song of greeting:

> A branch of may have I brought you
> And at your door it stands,
> It is but a sprout but well budded out
> By the work of our Lord's hand.

No wonder with all this accumulated lore of the centuries the tune in which it is concentrated stirs us to our depths.

Summer

The section devoted to Summer begins by the necessity of the obvious and the appropriate with 'Sumer is icumen in'. The composer makes no bones about including it as a folk-song in a folk-song suite, claiming that because 'it has long been a puzzle how this beautiful melody made its appearance among its contemporary monkish companions' it can reasonably be deduced that it 'owes its freedom and grace to the fact that it is a folk-tune not bound by theoretical restrictions'. Theoretical restrictions however have a way of conferring freedom, as we have already had occasion to observe, and 'Sumer is icumen in' of the thirteenth century lends itself to canonic treatment in four parts with a ground bass in two parts underneath. Chappell agrees with Vaughan Williams that it is not a monkish composition of John of Fornsete of Reading. He believes 'its superiority to be owing to its having been a national song or tune, selected, according to the custom of the time, as a basis for harmony and that it is not entirely a scholastic composition'.

Vaughan Williams's treatment begins with an orchestral statement of the 'pes' or two-part ostinato, immediately followed by a statement of the tune in the bass with the ostinato translated to the tenor, which proves the invertibility of these two component elements of the 'rota'. In due course the voices enter while the orchestra plays the 'pes', the order of entry being full unison chorus with the tune, semi-chorus in four parts embarking on the round, and the full chorus reinforcing the fourth entry.

The cuckoo that has been so assertive in the canon now has a song to herself. This is the familiar song beginning

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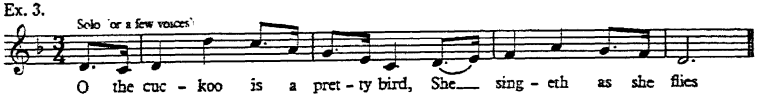

from Cecil Sharp's Somerset collection. It is to be sung by a solo in the first verse, by all voices in the second, to which a kind of descant is added in two parts. This descant is itself a kind of précis of the tune—variants do in fact exist with the smoother contour

of this counterpoint. The underpart is in thirds and sixths, which offsets the instrumental accompaniment to the first verse which was with similar consistency in consecutive fourths and fifths.

The second song—for the two parts of 'The Cuckoo' are treated as one song—is the even more widespread 'The Sprig of Thyme', whose words, together with those of the parallel song, 'The Seeds of Love' (which has however a different tune), are full of flower symbolism: thyme is virginity; the primrose early, too early, love; the red rose of June love fulfilled and happy; the willow the broken love of desertion. The particular variant of the tune used by Vaughan Williams is unidentifiable and it may be suspected that, as in the similar case of 'Dives and Lazarus', Vaughan Williams has himself behaved like the traditional singer, transforming the tune slightly in transmitting it. He has composed different descants for its several verses.

High summer is described with dubious agricultural and botanical accuracy in 'The Sheep Shearing', another of Sharp's songs.

> It's a rosebud in June and violets in full bloom
> And the small birds singing love-songs on each spray,
> We'll pipe and we'll sing, love, we'll dance in a ring, love,
> When each lad takes his lass.
> All on the green grass,
> And it's all to plough
> Where the fat oxen graze low
> And the lads and lasses to sheep-shearing go.

The tune is in the Dorian mode and the arrangement is set for two voices unaccompanied.

The last song of Summer is a romance of the country girl resisting the blandishments of the smart gentleman from town. The song here bears the title of 'The Green Meadow' but equally it is called 'The Lawyer'. It comes from the collection made by George Butterworth in Sussex. It is to be sung in unison by all voices and the accompaniment is of the simplest. The only complication is in the writing out of the tune which interpolates two bars of 9/8 time in a 6/8 time.

Autumn

Autumn contains three songs, 'John Barleycorn', 'The Unquiet Grave', and 'An Acre of Land'.

'John Barleycorn' is a symbolical ballad of the corn-spirit. In it under the personification of an English knight—he appears in many versions as Sir John Barleycorn—the whole agricultural process, which in itself is used as a symbol of death and resurrection, the victory of life over death, of seeming to die in order to live again, as in the legend of Persephone and Pluto, is rehearsed: John Barleycorn dies, he is ploughed into the earth, he remains inert in the ground, he appears again pale and wan but bearded, he is chopped down and bound up and finally poured out as a strong spirit in a glass.[1]

The ballad has many tunes, most with a family resemblance to each other. The one used by Vaughan Williams has a nonsense refrain, which apart from its rhythmic punch, accords with the idea of magical incantation. Its appropriateness to the autumn season is that the crux of the ballad is the cutting down of the barley in its prime, the harvest. The setting is for two-part semi-chorus with full chorus weighing in with the refrain, the orchestra having three different settings of increasingly florid figuration, though nothing very fanciful is allowed to contradict the forthright march of the tune.

Of 'The Unquiet Grave' and its place in the scheme the composer says: 'The young maiden meets her dead lover among the storms and cold winds of autumn.' The ballad, though very widely spread and occurring in many versions, is one of the few on a supernatural theme to be found in English folk-song. The tune is one of Sharp's original Somerset collection and the setting for three voices unaccompanied is the least simple of all in the cantata. To offset its eerie and moving character, as well as the comparative elaboration of its setting, it is followed by the sociable unison of 'An Acre of Land' in which the agricultural processes of 'John Barleycorn' turn up again but with their symbolical significance

[1] For a fuller elucidation of this remarkable song see my *Man, Mind and Music*, pp. 44–48.

more deeply buried. It belongs to the class of riddle songs, first cousin to nursery rhymes, relics of ancient lore lost in children's nonsense. Harrowing, reaping, threshing, winnowing, and milling the grain are all here but all carried out with incongruous implements. If cast in riddle form the questions would have an answer. Thus in the version known as 'Scarborough Fair' the singer sings 'And now I have answered your questions three I hope you'll answer as many for me', though in point of fact the song is not cast in dialogue form.

The tune is of Dr. Vaughan Williams's own from a collection he made in Wiltshire in 1904. It is a sociable song with a short refrain between the alternate lines:

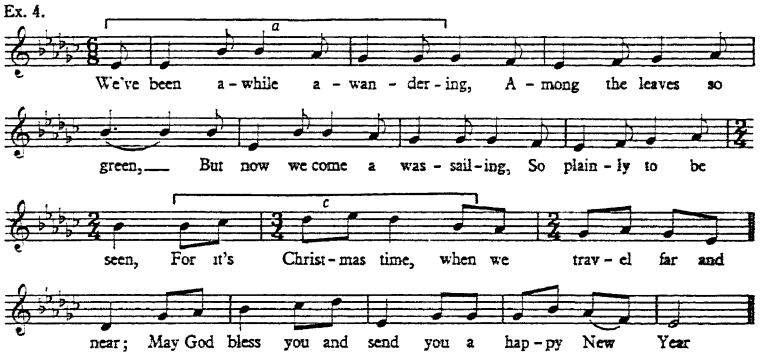
> Ivy sing ivery,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And a branch of green holly and ivery.

Winter

The inexhaustible wealth of Christmas music provides the composer with ample choice of material for celebrating the season of winter, even if he confines himself to strict folk-song and ignores those carols in which there is a discernible element of clerical or individual authorship among the factors which make us classify a song with that conveniently loose word 'traditional'. Vaughan Williams has taken a children's *quête* song from Yorkshire, a Wassail song from Gloucestershire, a true carol of the Nativity from Northamptonshire, and part of the Sussex Mummers' Carol. It may be well to observe in parenthesis that the local provenance of folk-songs has no real scientific value, but an editorial principle rightly established in the early days of folk-song collection, which demanded the place, date, and person to mark the source of each version of a song put into print, has left behind it the habit of ascribing songs to the counties where they were first found, a habit which is not without convenience for distinguishing variants and versions—the Wassail songs, for instance, can be usefully labelled by counties. English folk-songs are pretty widely distributed over the whole country, though some regions, notably Northumbria, preserve folk-songs not found elsewhere. Nevertheless students of

folk-song who know the insignificance of what they are doing still continue to attach the names of the county to folk-songs which happen to have been found in it.

Part IV begins with an orchestral prelude based on the two phrases *a* and *c* of the first tune. This is a Yorkshire Wassail song from Hooton Roberts near Sheffield and quite different from the song to similar words in *English County Songs*, which is also from South Yorkshire—our geographical distinctions fail us here.

Ex. 4.

This is harmonized in two parts with an accompaniment based on and expanded from phrase *c*. The final *tierce de Picardie* gives a wonderful reinforcement to the *happy* of the New Year wish.

The Gloucestershire Wassail song which follows is more truly a Wassail song in that it is a drinking song. Wassailing is essentially drinking in the dark days of winter at the turn of the year to the health of next summer's crops. In cider-making districts relics of sympathetic magic remain in the practice of wassailing in that the trees are toasted and sprinkled with the potion (of which the basis is cider). In this song all the inhabitants of the farm are toasted by the itinerant wassailers, the horse, the ox, the cow, and the farmer himself and the 'maid in lily-white frock'. Vaughan Williams had previously set this song in four parts, a version which became widely known through the English Singers and other subsequent madrigal parties. Here he sets it for massive unison with a descant.

'In Bethlehem City' belongs to the large family of carols known by the name of 'A Virgin unspotted'. It is a true carol in that it

retains the refrain which is a relic of the dance—the carol is ultimately a dance-song.

> Then let us be merry, cast sorrow away,
> Our Saviour Christ Jesus was born on this day.

This is sung at the end of every verse of what is in fact a ballad version of the Nativity story—the ballad by derivation is also a dance-song, though both carol and ballad had shed their dance by the time of the great age of carols and ballads, the fifteenth century. It is here set for three voices unaccompanied—for the original purposes of the Women's Institutes therefore it constituted one of the harder songs and was reserved for the more skilful choirs.

The Sussex Mummers' Carol with which the cantata ends strikes a more solemn note, which is indeed a benediction. Lucy Broadwood, who noted it in 1881 in the Horsham district, comments on the contrast between its solemnity—for it is a Crucifixion carol as to half its extant verses—and the appearance of the Mummers who sang it at the close of their folk-play 'St. George and the Turk'. Mummers and Wassailers always conclude their performances with 'God bless the master of this house', an admirable but not wholly disinterested sentiment. It is the last three verses in which this secular benediction is elaborated that Vaughan Williams has taken for his epilogue. He writes a prelude to it in counterpoint, in which the organ joins, and then brings in all voices in unison—in the second of the three verses, the mistress's verse, he doubles the tune in the deep bass and writes a descant above it of chords of the sixth brightened with bells. For the last verse, the children's verse, he harmonizes the tune with great solidity but with some unecclesiastical progressions, and in the last two lines adds a descant.

Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra

The limitations placed by the varying capacities of the players who were to perform the Concerto Grosso *en masse* in the Albert Hall were if anything more stringent than in the case of the Women's Institute singers. The Rural Music School teaches the violin in classes and many of its students would not have much

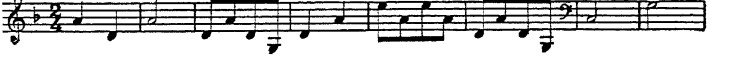
suppleness of finger to bring to their adult study of stringed instruments. Nevertheless some extraordinary results have been produced by such apparently unpromising methods.

The Concerto Grosso contemplates three grades of performer: there must be a Concertino of skilled players, just as there was in the days of Bach and Handel, when petty dukes and great families made their domestic music on the basis of just such a distinction between the more and the less skilled. The Tutti (or Ripieno, as the eighteenth century called it) is designed as the main accompaniment, which could be undertaken by players capable of the third position or simple double stops. There is a third considerably subdivided section for beginners. In it there are two parts for violins and one each for viola and cello, and in addition a part each for violin, viola, cello, and bass, 'for those players who prefer to use only open strings'. Could tact be more delicate? The full score therefore presents on its first page eighteen staves, which on its first performance were divided between 400 players, the majority of whom were 'Ad libs'. It has been well called a concerto for all comers.

There are five movements to what is really as much a suite as a concerto. It begins and ends with a ceremonious movement, 'Intrada', which would be like the Handelian version of a French Ouverture if it were not even more like Vaughan Williams setting the bells of heaven and earth ringing with simple progressions. The open-string players play their simple part from the very first notes, and the Tutti very largely duplicates the Concertino, since the music is very broad and not very difficult and does not here exploit the differences in weight of tone available from the disposition into three unequal forces.

'Burlesca Ostinata' changes from D major of the opening to D minor. D is a good key for open strings but the suite does not monotonously adhere to it as its eighteenth-century forerunner did. The ostinato on which the movement is constructed is an ingenious construction from the open notes of string instruments.

Ex. 1. *Allegro moderato*

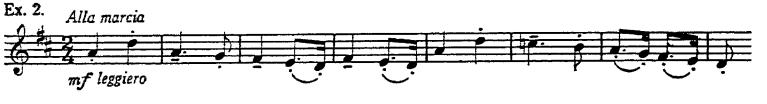


There are five variations on this canto fermo before a middle section, at which there is a change to triple time and the major mode with a tune over it. The ostinato returns for two more variations but is not strictly pursued any further in case the patient Ad Libs get bored with it. In its place ideas from both sections are tossed about in rough alternation so as to make a more exciting, though ultimately tranquil, conclusion.

The Sarabande is in simple binary form, though the second half is not marked to be repeated, based on a tune in G minor with its seventh inflected now flat now sharp, an ambiguity that paradoxically lends it a distinct quality.

The Scherzo is true to its name in making jokes which even a beginner can appreciate. Thus after a tremendous G on the open string a tune like one of Beethoven's in level crotchets starts up. But though it is in C minor it avoids the A flat and it is not the main tune, for after a chromatic slither a tune in short two-bar phrases in C major asserts itself. After the double bar it goes on again but is broken up by some staccato passages. The trio goes from triple into duple time and back into C minor. There is no repetition of the Scherzo but a twelve-bar coda marked presto.

The fifth movement, March and Reprise, makes more of the contrast between the different masses of tone. The main tune

Ex. 2.

is first played by the Concertino then taken up by the rest. Its balancing phrase contains syncopations which again are played first by the Concertino then by the Tutti but not by the Ad Libs, who are only given a few skeleton accompaniments to perform. The second section goes to A minor, and again the Concertino has the first say. At a change to triple time two new features are introduced—one is a tune containing a dotted-note figure, which alternates with Ex. 2, but becomes more and more dotted so as to work up for a repetition of the Intrada. The other is that even the Ad Libs are allowed among all this strongly marked rhythm some

simple off-beat notes. The Intrada then rounds off the work which it so ceremoniously began.

Thus in spite of the stringency of the limitations there is enough to keep each section of the orchestra occupied and interested and the result is real music that is never banal or condescending.

The Sons of Light

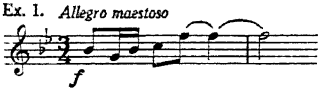
The problem of part-singing in schools can never be solved because Nature ordains that boys' voices break at puberty and so puts altos out of action and brings into being some erratic basses. As for tenors they are the freaks of pure chance and may not happen at all. In girls' schools the critical period is less devastating to the school choir, but sopranos outnumber mezzos and real contraltos are almost as rare as tenors. The insoluble problem is evaded in various ways: girls can be made to sing in three spurious parts; songs can be arranged in three parts only for sopranos, altos, and basses; some boys' voices can be nursed through a progressive descent from treble to bass, filling in the alto and tenor for brief periods on the way. Or it can be tackled heroically by simply setting whatever choir is available to sing in the standard four parts, S.A.T.B., and by a galvanic eye in the conductor and reckless disregard for the singing teachers' canons of voice production charge through to a cheerful if raucous triumph by sheer weight of numbers.

The Sons of Light was written to enable a large number of school children in their teens to have the benefit of true four-part choral singing. The vocal writing goes neither too high nor too low for comfort or effectiveness, and antiphony is preferred to counterpoint.

It was written for the Schools Music Association, a body that has specialized in non-competitive festivals of associated choirs, and it was dedicated to Mr. Bernard Shore, former viola player but at the time one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. It was first sung by 1,150 boys and girls during the Festival of Britain, 1951.

The poem by Ursula Wood (Mrs. Vaughan Williams) provides three movements. Its theme is the creation of the world—no less—but conceived in terms of myth rather than theology or geology. Out of chaos came Light and Dark, 'to go their separate ways of day and night'. The Sun drives his chariot across the sky; the moon presides over the stillness of the night, where the stars shine in their constellations. The stars also give the twelve signs of the Zodiac and their names and influences provide the text for a middle movement. In the last movement the theme is less astral, more human. Just as in Jacquetta Hawkes's book, *A Land*, man appears as the final product of geological change, so in 'Messengers of Speech' Ursula Wood comes from heaven to earth: Time has begun and man has names by which to speak of the elements—for, as she says in a prefatory 'argument', nothing can exist until it has a name—which is good philosophy.

The first movement 'Darkness and Light' begins 'allegro maestoso' with a fanfare for trumpet:

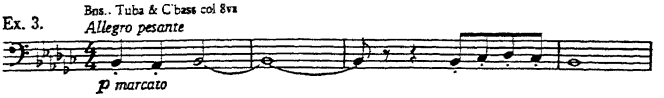
Ex. 1. *Allegro maestoso*

which provides both the components of its own chordal accompaniment and the outlines of the melody on which the voices launch the first verse of the poem. Each of the five verses which follow receives different rhythmic treatment to symbolize the different motions of sun, moon, and stars. The Stars indeed have their verse in a different verbal metre, which is put by the composer into a flowing 6/8 ballad metre. Their frosty glint is transmitted into sound in the chordal progression

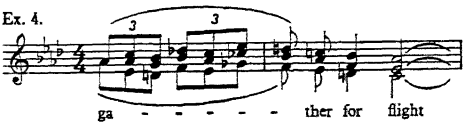
Ex. 2.

The intervening verses show many of Vaughan Williams's characteristic idioms—the striding bass, the break from duplets into triplets, the gapped melodies, the sharp juxtaposition of unrelated

tonalities. The verse about the moon provides a page or two of contrapuntal writing which is as imitative as a fugal exposition. The movement ends, or would end if it was not marked 'segue', upon the unresolved first chord of Ex. 2, sustained by the voices declaiming with measured emphasis 'till Time is done'.

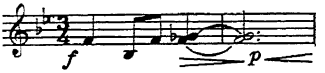
The second movement is 'The Song of the Zodiac'. 'Every month of the year there shines one of the Zodiac's twelve signs', it begins, with this as its musical motto:

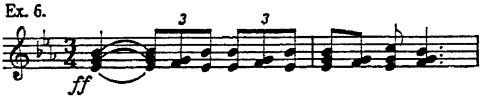
Ex. 3.

which lends itself to inversions and diminutions as the Ram and the Bull stream across the sky. Gemini are distinguished by a dotted note figure; the Crab's motion is represented by oscillations of parallel fourths, not by any cancrizans device. Leo in C major stalks through the night in a Valkyrie rhythm, but Virgo is no Brynhilde—she swims in the sky as the swallows:

Ex. 4.

Libra, the Scales, bring autumn gales, which sweep in contrary motion and conflicting two-against-three rhythms up and down the gamut. Scorpio returns to the low pitch and deliberate rhythm of Ex. 1 for its 'deadly sting'. Sagittarius the Archer rides and Capricorn the goat dances to variations of dotted 6/8 rhythm, marked out for the goat by the xylophone. For Aquarius the graver triplets dissolve into semiquaver sextuplets in the accompaniment and for Pisces into septuplets, with the voices murmuring a gentle up-and-down melody like a weed swaying in the eddy of a stream. Ex. 3 in the most formal of recapitulations 'ends the tale that the Ram begins'.

The short finale, 'The Messengers of Speech', is introduced, like the first movement, with a fanfare figure which generates the

thick chords in the verses that answer it, and the vocal melody which follows it. But it is terser than Ex. 1 and given to the horns.

Ex. 5.

Ex. 1 itself is heard evoking man's dominion and majesty as the climax of creation. Still another version of the same basic idea accompanies the last words of all, in which the ideas of light and of names as emblems of man's power are combined to produce the exultation of joy:

Ex. 6.

So this music for youth goes direct by means of clarion calls and a triumphant stride, uncomplicated part-writing but modern harmony, to those fundamental ideas, fittingly expressed in monosyllables, light and life. At seventy-eight Vaughan Williams knew in his heart what the young feel only in their bones. In this cantata he makes it explicit to their understanding.

Chamber Music

Introduction

FOR a composer with so large an output the amount of Vaughan Williams's chamber music is small. Though he was brought up, as he has told us, more to the violin than to the keyboard, he has only written two string quartets and one quintet. The absence of duet sonatas may be accounted for by his lack of sympathy with the piano. The piano is used with string quartet only in the song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge*. An early piano quintet in C minor (*c.* 1908) was scrapped; as also was a horn quintet of the same period.

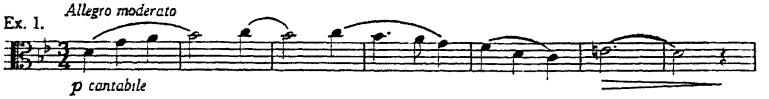
The only other instance of the piano being concerted with strings is in 'Six Studies in English Folksong' for cello and piano, which was written for May Mukle in 1927, though of course *The Lark Ascending* and the Suite for Viola have piano accompaniments as alternative to small orchestra.

The Household Music, which consists of movements founded on three Welsh hymn-tunes, was designed primarily for string quartet, but may be played by 'almost any combination of instruments which may be gathered together at one time in a household'. The Suite for Pipes is written for a quartet of recorders.

String Quartet No. 1 in G minor

The first string quartet in G minor dates from 1909 and though it was revised in 1921 it bears many of the marks of Vaughan Williams's early manner alike in melodic quality and regularity of form. Equally it bears upon it the marks of some of his idiosyncrasies—the use of the title Romance for the slow movement and the deliberate exploitation of consecutive fifths in the Finale, though in the melody, not in the bass as in his later mannerism. It has one peculiarity of part-writing: the word 'solo' appears from time to time against the various parts to indicate melodic

prominence, from which that voice is released by the occurrence of the sign ⊕ to indicate that 'the instrument concerned resumes its normal place in the ensemble'. The composer's life-long partiality for the viola is thus early apparent, for to it is assigned the opening statement of the first subject:

Ex. 1.

This is repeated in various forms, as it might be by Haydn or Beethoven, and the only irregularity is one of rhythm where the bar length is extended (and thereby quickened) by a beat to form the bridge passage to the second subject, which appears in E major (of a sort):

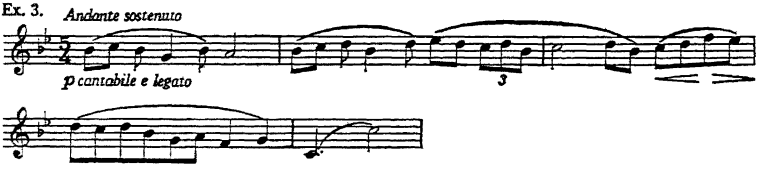
Ex. 2.

Here a triplet rhythm is introduced into the accompanying parts.

In the development section Ex. 2 is used in augmentation, with the same device, for securing greater animation by putting four beats into the bar instead of three, adopted as in the bridge passage of the exposition, and the melody, now in C, retains the feature of the flattened sixth and seventh. The recapitulation follows classical precedent in recalling all the main material and incidental features.

The second movement is a Minuet and Trio. The Minuet, like the second subject of the first movement, is in E major with a flattened seventh. It is marked with normal repeats. Its Trio is in C major with another tune containing a flat sixth and seventh.

The slow movement Romance has its first subject in 5/4 time and a tune in the Dorian mode, significant features of the emerging personal style of the composer:

Ex. 3.

There is a middle section in which the quintuple time is abandoned for triple and the tonality shifts to the flats. The first idea is repeated to complete a simple ternary form.

The Finale is described as a rondo capriccioso which returns to G minor, the theme of which is

Ex. 4.

String effects are employed—'sur la touche', 'on the heel', 'sul ponticello', alternations of pizzicato and arco. The episodes include a fugato; the coda goes presto and finishes with great chords and a cadenza which runs down through all the parts.

The violin was Vaughan Williams's instrument. This string quartet shows him willing to use its hallowed medium for something less weighty than the German masters usually preferred for it.

On Wenlock Edge

The song-cycle *On Wenlock Edge* has some claim to be included in the chapter on chamber music, since the accompaniment is for piano and string quartet—though it is possible to dispense with the quartet and provision is made in the score for that contingency. It is an early work (1909), which came just after Vaughan Williams's period of work with Ravel and so prompted the too percipient comment that it showed French influence. It is in fact basic Vaughan Williams, and the idioms of his maturity, the consecutive triads in juxtaposition, the use of swaying consecutive fourths instead of sixths and the little melismata of four or six notes up and down, begin to appear in it. But romantic idioms from his first period also persist—repeated triplets to convey agitation and a certain amount of chromaticism.

Grant Richards the publisher relates how A. E. Housman was not musical and did not like giving permission for the setting of his poems. To Vaughan Williams, who pressed him, he retorted, 'Very well, I give you permission but I do it with a very bad

grace.' And he was not pleased when he found that the composer had excised a verse from 'Is my team ploughing?'—the verse about the goal-keeper standing up to keep the goal is not, according to Vaughan Williams, tolerable poetry. But there was something pleasantly astringent in Housman's pessimism in the days before two wars had robbed mankind of its faith in itself as well as in God, and many composers were drawn to Housman, especially to *A Shropshire Lad*.

The cycle *On Wenlock Edge* takes six of the poems, all songs of mortal extinction, and sets them for tenor voice and elaborate accompaniment of strings and piano. In the first, which gives its title to the whole, the song is musically a picture of the gale: the strings play tremolando and the piano keeps up the agitation, while underneath a bass stalks up and down repeating the first phrase of the vocal melody. In No. 2, 'From far, from eve and morning', the piano has wide-spread consecutive common chords that recall the setting of the 'Infinite Shining Heavens' in *Songs of Travel*. The strings do not play with the piano but take over from it the accompaniment to the middle section. In the third song 'Is my team ploughing?' the question is asked in quasi-recitative over a held tonic chord on the strings, the answer is accompanied by agitated triplets from the piano with the cello threading a chromatic path downhill. In the third (and last) verse the strings have a fuller accompaniment which increases the tension up to the melodramatic climax 'Never ask me whose', which is unaccompanied. 'Oh when I was in love with you' is light, if cynical, and is accompanied mostly pizzicato. In 'Bredon Hill' the accompaniment is of the greatest elaboration in the whole cycle—its purpose is to reproduce the hum of the steeple. The piano has chords made up of thirds, mostly minor thirds, the strings chords in which the intervals are more open and fifths are prominent to suggest the bell harmonics. The tolling of 'the one bell only' is put into the piano part by striking an octave G. In the last song 'Clun' we have more slowly swaying chords but the arpeggios from the piano suggest the movement of the river. The end has the stillness of death achieved, as music can only achieve the effect of standstill, by slow motion, by distant oscillating chords a tone

apart slowly and extremely softly spreading out to the extremes of the keyboard.

The poetic impulse, the feeling for the English countryside, the visual and audible imagery of wind, river, and belfry are there, the irony, which is perhaps after half a century a little faded, is dramatically handled. But on the whole the cycle is not completely successful. The elaboration of the apparatus is at war to some extent with the greatest merit of Housman's verses—their economy. The songs are reasonably terse, but Housman's poems are epigrammatic and do not take kindly to the retarding processes of music—though Heaven knows some good Housman songs have been composed in spite of it.

Phantasy Quintet

The string quintet—with two violas—followed quickly on the first string quartet. Its date is about 1910. It is dedicated to W. W. Cobbett, who is responsible for the 'Phantasy' of the title.

Cobbett, who died in 1937 at the age of ninety, was a wealthy amateur and a great devotee of chamber music: he compiled and edited the Cyclopaedia of Chamber Music which bears his name and he established a prize for new chamber compositions in 1905, of which the distinguishing feature was the single-movement form. The old English title 'Phantasy' was adopted so as to differentiate it from full-length works of the sonata pattern in three or four movements, but there was no implication that the old imitative counterpoint was to be copied. Many essays in the form compressed four movements into one by substituting for the development section of an ordinary sonata movement a slow section with or without a scherzando section and for the recapitulation a quick section and coda which would serve the dual purpose of recapitulation and finale. Stanford called it a 'tabloid preparation of the three or four movements of a sonata containing all ingredients of the prescription without exceeding the proportions of a single movement'. No form was prescribed however by Cobbett either for prize compositions or commissions. The only

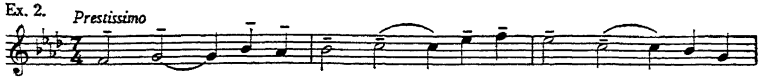
stipulation was that the work must play in one continuous movement and form a coherent whole.

Vaughan Williams's quintet is one of the products of Cobbett's enterprise, and though it is not in the least like a sonata movement, either full or condensed, its four movements are linked and have a common thematic origin. The first viola gives out a long theme shaped like a low arch, of which the first three bars contain the germinal motive:

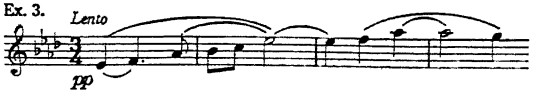
Ex. 1. *Lento ma non troppo*

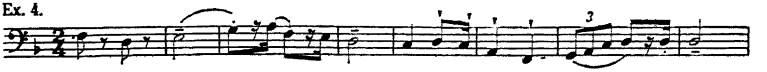
Though it does not look it, this is a tune in a pentatonic F, and when the violins come in after ten bars they make a chord of F. The first violin has a solo, a rough inversion of the viola's theme, and that too ends on a chord of F. In the scale of pentatonic F the third and the sixth are missing and the seventh is flat. There is a juxtaposition of chords of A major, of G and C and B flat major, but the A chord is the antithetical pole to F. The Prelude ends with a repetition of Ex. 1 unaccompanied and an injunction to attack the Scherzo.

This begins as though it is going to be an ostinato movement, rather like the ostinato in the Double Partita, which began life as a sextet, but the figure is not kept up, only its crotchet motion, which is seven to the bar taken prestissimo. The thematic connexion with Ex. 1 is not immediately apparent, but sure enough after a while the second violin, marked 'solo', has this:

Ex. 2. *Prestissimo*

The mark 'solo' is deliberately used to indicate where the melodic prominence is to be, and it is followed, as in the G minor string quartet, by a sign to signify where the instrument resumes its normal place in the ensemble. The central tonality of this movement is D, and when Ex. 2 reappears in the last section of it it is an acknowledged D major.

In the third movement 'Alla Sarabanda' the thematic connexion is made plain at the outset on the first violin:

Ex. 3.

The fourth movement is entitled 'Burlesca'. It begins contrapuntally and the relationship of the theme announced by the cello to Ex. 1 is confined to the rising fourth and the triplet:

Ex. 4.

Pizzicato, trills, a pom-pom bass, create liveliness, which is interrupted by an andante section, molto sostenuto by contrast to all the rosin-splashing that has been going on, in which Ex. 4 appears in the bass while the treble has a tune above it which is a sort of cousin-once-removed of Ex. 1. Then the Prelude returns and brings with it a slender cadenza founded on the high violin tune of the first movement. After that the pom-pom returns and there is a coda (andante) founded on Ex. 4. These alternations of theme and tempo serve to relate the finale to the earlier movements and so to unify the Phantasy. The work ends on a chord of D major. What has happened to the tonality? The basic key of the quintet is D minor. The Prelude was in a not too major kind of F; the Saraband was in F minor; the two quick movements were in an explicit D minor. F and D are close relations.

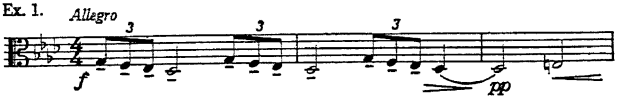
The work is slight but attractive. It deserves more frequent performance than it nowadays receives.

String Quartet No. 2 in A minor

'For Jean on her Birthday'

This (second) string quartet dates from the time of the war and the Fifth Symphony, which it resembles in the character of its movements, namely Prelude, Romance, Scherzo, and Epilogue.

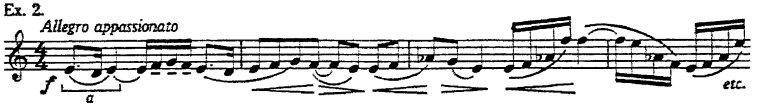
The Epilogue is a short movement as befits its name, but in the character of its musical substance it is not unlike the Passacaglia which provides the close to the Fifth Symphony, whose earlier movements are also entitled Prelude, Scherzo, and Romance (in that order). But the nature of the music itself, as well as its lay-out, is determined by the dedication, which is also part of the title, 'For Jean on her Birthday'. The Jean of this title, as of the little cryptic 'Greetings from Joan to Jean' appended to the Epilogue, is Jean Stewart, the violist of the Menges String Quartet, who having for a long time urged upon Uncle Ralph, as the composer is affectionately known to a wide circle of friends, that he should write another string quartet, was delighted to receive out of the blue on her birthday two movements of a string quartet dedicated to her. She had had no inkling that her words were likely to bear fruit and later in the year she received the remaining two movements. In all four the viola has the first statement of the theme and is virtually leader of the consort in place of the first violin as in normal quartet writing, *prima inter pares*. This disposition has several far-reaching stylistic effects, most conspicuous perhaps in the imitational counterpoint of the Romance; but the success of the experiment is beyond doubt in a work of this length and weight. For, though resembling the Fifth Symphony in its serene atmosphere of quiet confidence and contentment, the quartet is essentially a small work carrying no cosmic or even high public significance. The dedications with their very personal references have already been mentioned. There is a further reference to an outside source in the use, as the first subject of the Scherzo, of a theme from *49th Parallel*, a film for which Vaughan Williams had supplied music, which was certainly too good on the evidence of this movement alone to be thrown away on an ephemeral film. Something of the chill of the Canadian scene depicted in the film makes itself felt in the tremolando passages which accompany the theme:

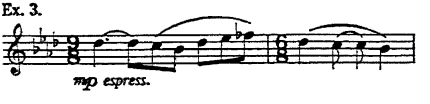
Ex. 1. *Allegro*

One further point which bears on the general character of the whole work, as in the parallel case of the Fifth Symphony, is the nature of the movements labelled Romance. Romance for Vaughan Williams is free from erotic emotion and seems rather to signify something nearer to a tenderness for all humanity, which superficially seems almost religious. It is in this tract of human experience that Vaughan Williams reaches out to join hands with Beethoven, in feeling though not in any technically describable means of expression.

The first performance was given by the Menges String Quartet at the National Gallery concert on 12 September 1944.

Prelude

The Prelude is a condensed sonata movement concerned chiefly with one theme, the first, that is announced immediately by the viola solo:

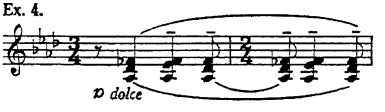
Ex. 2.

The second theme, which is primarily concerned to offer a contrast of rhythms, is introduced at the first change of key, also by viola, against a syncopated accompaniment:

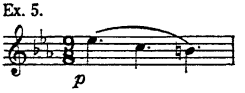
Ex. 3.

This exposition is followed by a development in which both themes are elaborated and work up to a tonal and emotional climax. Whereafter, the first theme (Ex. 2) is recapitulated, though this part of the movement is more coda than recapitulation. In this tripartite movement the exposition is concise, though it allows for several presentations and treatments of the first theme; the middle section is nearly as long (three pages of the score as against the four of the exposition) and the coda is brief. If it is regarded (as above) as a condensed sonata movement the modification is not like that of the overture in which the development

is omitted—it is the recapitulation that has disappeared. Preludes are usually monothematic movements. This one, as will be seen in the detailed analysis below, is not that, but the overall impression it makes is that of a discourse upon a text of which the essence is contained in the first bar.

The theme (Ex. 2) after a solo statement is accompanied by parallel chords of the sixth in the rhythm of its first phrase (*a*). The semiquavers are given an innings before the theme comes up for its second presentation in imitational counterpoint. Its third statement is in the form of a stream of chords of the sixth in the top three parts against a bass in contrary motion. This is a somewhat extended version. The next and last restores the theme to the viola, accompanied by sixth chords, with the first bar doing duty in emphatic reiterations for the whole tune.

The second theme, it has been said, is accompanied by off-the-beat chords, and the justification for describing it as an accompaniment may be found in the expression marks 'dolce' applied to the chords and 'espr.' applied to the viola's theme in triplets, but the rhythmic complications are really as important as the tune, for though they can be roughly summarized as syncopation they embody cross-rhythm of twos and threes against each other, thus:

Ex. 4.

which is actually the accompaniment of Ex. 3 (though incidentally it does not bear the signature 9/8 in the score). Another feature of this section is the introduction in the later part of the theme of a motif compounded of a third and a semitone both descending. This third is minor or diminished and is sometimes written as an augmented second.

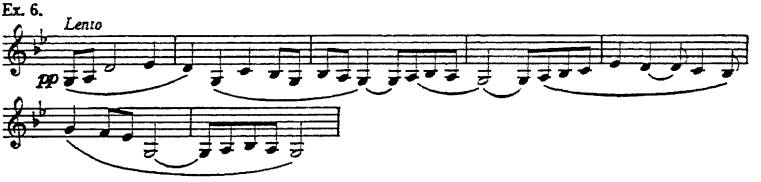
Ex. 5.

This fretful interval comes out into the open in the development section, is indeed the accompaniment to the resumption of the

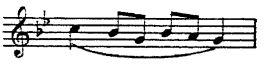
first theme and provides at the climax all the emotional disturbance of the tremolando chords in double-stopping. To allay this excitement the second theme (Ex. 3) is recalled over a pedal point on A with the general direction 'tranquillo'. The final affirmation of the first theme is fragmentarily accompanied by the violins playing the descending motif intermittently with it.

This is not a passionate movement—A minor is no key for high passions—but it has a certain insistence. It is an argument on a serious theme pursued with fervour, but not the main purpose of the meeting, to which the players come in the next movement.

Romance

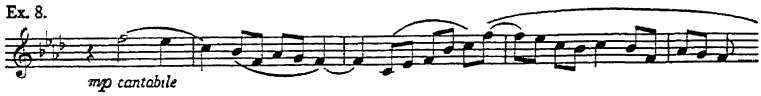
The structural principle on which the slow movement, Romance, is built is the antithesis of imitation and its extreme opposite, block chords. The key is G minor. The strings are directed to play senza vibrato, an instruction in due time cancelled by 'cantabile'. The main theme is enunciated by each instrument in turn but is varied in length and detail, as each takes it up from its predecessor in a flowing web of non-metrical melodies. The viola begins

Ex. 6.

The second violin follows in the third bar, first violin in the tenth. Thereupon the bass immediately enters but with an inverted form of this tranquil and meditative tune. One bar in the second violin's statement is important for its figural use subsequently

Ex. 7.

with or without anacrusis.

It is used by the viola to punctuate the chords in E flat minor which constitute the second idea. The third idea introduces triplet

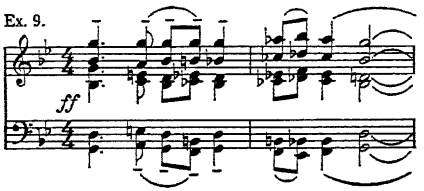
movement and the key of F minor—contiguous minor keys a tone apart seem to constitute the tonal scheme of this quartet. Against the triplets a new solo theme is played by the four instruments in turn, a tune not strongly contrasted with the first theme (Ex. 6), but a reinforcement of it:

Ex. 8.

This also is introduced imitationally in different octaves against an almost continuous counter-subject of triplets. Note the resemblance of the second bar to Ex. 7.

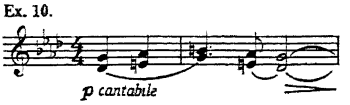
In the brief development (thirteen bars) the triplet quavers and the chord idea of the second subject are combined so as to generate a climax. The recapitulation which then comes deals at full length with the first subject (Ex. 6) in the freest contrapuntal style, more briefly with the choral idea and with the triplets not at all. The movement runs down, paring away its thematic substance till only Ex. 7 is left, the viola having the last word, as it had had the first.

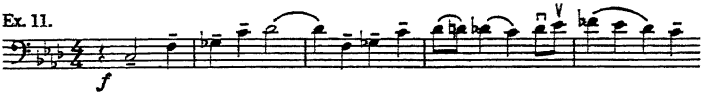
Scherzo

This movement has no formal resemblance to the normal scherzo and trio, unless the chordal theme Ex. 9

Ex. 9.

with its suggestion of a drone, which is historically a mark of the trio section of a minuet, can be regarded as the equivalent of a trio. But the general feeling of the movement is one of organic growth from Ex. 1 as its germinal motif. The origin of the movement in the film would account for the continuity in place of the usual sectional structure of a scherzo. Its emotional purpose in the context of this string quartet is to provide the contrast, the presence of the alien element to be overcome and absorbed.

Ex. 1 ('Theme from the "49th Parallel" '), so marked, is given out by the viola to be answered at once by the other strings in octaves playing 'con sordini', 'sul ponticello', and tremolando. Next the other strings, still in octaves, take over Ex. 1 while the viola embarks on a new idea, a tune in double stops marked 'cantabile':

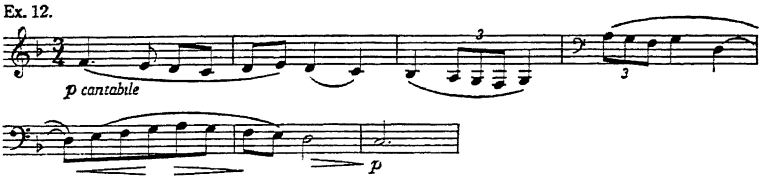
Ex. 10.

which as it unfolds itself becomes increasingly chromatic. A restatement of Ex. 1, echoed by the other strings in octaves, leads to the onset of continuous triplet motion and still another, more wide-ranging theme from the viola:

Ex. 11.

This is in turn taken up by the other strings in octaves—while the viola keeps triplet motion going. The climax to which all this leads is crowned by the abandonment of octaves and the substitution of four different rhythms for a few bars which lead into the section dominated by Ex. 9. It may be observed that the four flats in the signature of Ex. 1 and all the first part of the Scherzo proclaim F minor but in fact produce a very flat form of G minor. Now that we come to the trio (if trio it is) we have G minor in name as well as practice. This section however is short (fourteen bars) and is linked by a short cadenza for the viola to a recapitulation of Exx. 1 and 9. As in the other movements this recapitulation is much condensed and is content to recall the principal themes with the merest hint of Exx. 10 and 11. The last few bars, coda if you like but very organic with the rest of the movement, are but an expansion in diminution of the viola's cadenza.

Epilogue

The short epilogue has a subtitle 'From Joan to Jean', Joan being Joan of Arc. The opening tune (Ex. 12) had at one time been

destined for a film about Joan of Arc that did not materialize. So here again the composer's economy proved to be pure gain. It is a short meditation on a flowing tune in F major enunciated, as always, by the viola:

Ex. 12.

The texture is clear; there is not a single accidental in the whole movement, except a passing G sharp in the second violin after the key has changed to D major, which it does for the second half of the movement. The triplet feature prevents the counterpoint from stagnating; the opening bar of Ex. 12 lends itself to gentle imitation now and again but not too often. When the key changes to D the direction 'tranquillo' is added, and so indeed the quartet ends.

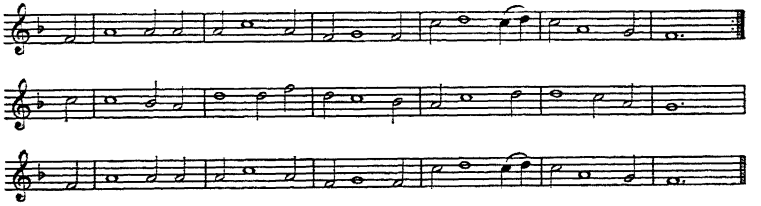
Household Music and Suite for Pipes

Besides the string quartets and quintets which are chamber music of the aristocratic sort, Vaughan Williams has considered the needs of the lowly in the Household Music and the Suite for Pipes.

The score of the Household Music is set out as for string quartet with an optional horn part, which may be played or omitted without involving any other members of the consort. But for the strings may be substituted oboe, clarinet, flute, recorder, saxophone or cornet, or their equivalents at different pitches—the bass alternatives thus being bassoon, bass clarinet, recorder, B flat saxophone, and euphonium. The violin and cello in combination may requisition the viola part. Alternative parts are provided for transposing instruments. The work dates from 1941 when ordinary musical life was disrupted, and on the other hand at camps and aerodromes men and women with the most

varied musical abilities discovered each other and could get together if only they could find something to play. For reasons of compass and a common denominator of musical experience hymn-tunes were chosen as the basis of Household Music—just as the brass bands started their life with hymns as their point of departure. The three movements are a Fantasia based on 'Crug-y-bar', a Scherzo based on 'St. Denio', and a set of variations on 'Aberystwyth'. All the tunes be it noted are Welsh, as are those which form the subjects for the three Preludes for organ ('Bryn Calfaria', 'Rhosymedre', 'Hyfrydol'). All these except 'Crug-y-bar' were included by Vaughan Williams in *The English Hymnal*.

The Fantasia is like one of Bach's chorale preludes in that it uses the constituent phrases of the tune as the basis for freely flowing counterpoint. 'Crug-y-bar' (to be found in *Songs of Praise*, No. 609) contains the quasi-syncopations found in some Welsh folk-songs—'Mae'nghariad i'n Fenws' (My sweetheart's like Venus) is a well-known instance—and it is the rhythmic pecularity of Ex. 1 that is exploited in the part-writing.

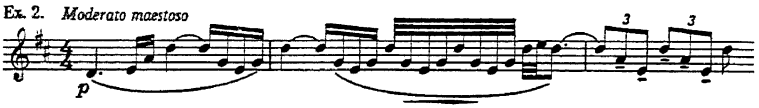
Ex. 1.

The Scherzo is again founded on a rhythmic feature, not in this case present in the tune itself (*English Hymnal*, No. 407), but imposed on it by making the bar contain sometimes three crotchets and sometimes six quavers, i.e. by alternating simple and compound time. The bell-like character of the tune was brought out by Holst when he used it for his 'Festival Chime' and the point of the Scherzo can be described as the combination of pealing and chiming bells.

'Aberystwyth' is a tune composed by Joseph Parry for a hymn-book issued in 1879. By the turn of the century it had displaced J. B. Dykes's tune 'Hollingside' for 'Jesu Lover of my Soul',

though Vaughan Williams in *The English Hymnal* keeps 'Hollingside' for that hymn and uses 'Aberystwyth' for 'Saviour when in dust to Thee'. The theme is not stated in hymn-like harmony but is divided contrapuntally between the four parts. Eight variations follow.

The first public performance was in the form of the string quartet at a Boosey and Hawkes concert on 5 October 1941 by the Blech Quartet.

The Suite for Pipes was written for the Pipers' Guild Quartet—the pipes in question being home-made bamboo pipes played like recorders. The players bring with them an armful apiece so as to have one available for every key required. The score merely prescribes treble, alto, bass, but several keys appear in this suite.

There are four movements—one Intrada and three in dance forms. The chief concessions to the limitations of the instruments, which are weak in overtones, is the use of unison and octave passages whereby some reinforcement is brought to the first few upper partials which are all that the pipes produce—hence their cool but monotonous tone. The Intrada in D major is founded on

This gapped fanfare and flourish lends itself to imitational counterpoint—parallel instances can be found up and down Vaughan Williams's work, in the Serenade to Music, for instance, and in *The Sons of Light*. An alternating phrase is provided by a march tune which is evolved out of Ex. 1 by augmentation. The second movement is a Minuet in A without a sixth in the scale, but the tonality is kept unstable as though uncertain whether to come down in F sharp minor or B minor. The Trio is in B minor. There is much octave writing in this movement. The third movement is a Valse in B minor with a trio in A thus reciprocating the tonal scheme of the Minuet, but again the keys are fluid. The Finale is a jig in G—in which key the suite ends.

Works directly based on Folk-Tunes

Introduction

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS has repaid his general indebtedness to folk-music by adopting for certain original compositions folk themes and has thereby contributed something unique to the heritage of English music. The differences between folk and composed, traditional and popular music are sharply drawn in Britain. In some European countries, including our own Celtic fringe, the distinction cannot be so clearly maintained—in some cultures, for instance, composition does not aim at being original but at being well within a folk tradition. For us however a folk-song is a song of unknown authorship preserved, or, as Cecil Sharp said, created, by oral transmission. Whatever the ultimate origin the folk character of such a song is the product of transmission without the fixative intervention of print. But even with us folk-music and composed music sometimes come nearer together than at others—the Elizabethan era was such a time—and the nationalist schools of the Continent, Russia, Bohemia, and Hungary, in which folk-music is a direct fertilizing influence upon original composition, manifest a similar *rapprochement*.

In Vaughan Williams however the folk element is to be seen in two quite separate states—the pervasive and the specific. It is a paradox of folk-music that those who care most for it, the collectors for instance who have gone direct to the oral tradition to record the tunes of the people, and are most aware of its intrinsic value in its unharmonized state, have never been able to resist the temptation of finding a further value in it as the raw material for more complex arts of arrangement and of free composition. Vaughan Williams is at once lover, scholar, and collector of folk-tunes, but he is also an inveterate arranger and re-composer of folk material.

The general problem of the use of folk-music thematically in extended composition emerged among the nationalist composers of the nineteenth century. A certain recalcitrance of tunes to the process of symphonic development soon became manifest when the nationalist composers began to use folk-tunes as themes for symphonies. Composers then tried a rather looser form of treatment of folk-tunes, being reluctant to forgo the outstanding melodic beauty of this *materia musica*—this was the rhapsody. Vaughan Williams himself adopted this plan in his Three Norfolk Rhapsodies. Frank variation on a folk-melody offered another possibility, of which Delius availed himself in 'Brigg Fair', though his touch changed the character of the song. Ultimately however it was in the absorption of folk-song idiom into a personal style, as practised, for instance, by Dvořák, Bartók, and Vaughan Williams, that the fertilizations of folk-song became most potent.

Nevertheless Vaughan Williams has in a few compositions gone some way to disprove Constant Lambert's brilliant half-truth—'the whole trouble with a folk-song is that once you have played it through there is nothing more you can do except play it over again and play it rather louder'. These works are the Norfolk Rhapsody, the Fantasia on Christmas Carols, the Fantasia on Sussex folk-tunes for cello, which has now however been 'scrapped', the Running Set, written for dance accompaniment, the English Folk-Song Suite originally written for military band, and the Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'.

Somewhere between folk-song arrangement and original composition comes a small suite of Six Studies in English Folk-Song for cello and piano which was published in 1927 and dedicated to May Mukle. There are alternative versions of the solo part for violin, viola, and clarinet. These little pieces are not, according to the composer, exact transcriptions of specific and identifiable folk-songs, but each is founded on a strophic melody with a recognizable likeness to a definite type of folk-tune. The first is in fact the tune out of which Vaughan Williams made the part-song 'The Spring Time of the Year'—the original is the ballad 'Lovely on the Water'. The second tune has a wide compass, an octave drop and a half-way feminine cadence of three repeated notes like

many Irish tunes. The third is a good square ballad tune in the Aeolian mode, the fourth a carol, the fifth a love song. Number six is the Scherzo of the set, a brisk patter song. The accompaniments are lightly written for the piano and show an aptitude for bringing out rather than smothering the character of the tune.

Norfolk Rhapsody

On 4 December 1903, Vaughan Williams took down from the singing of an Essex shepherd near Brentwood the folk-song 'Bushes and Briars'—a song, like 'The Seeds of Love' heard by Cecil Sharp from the lips of a gardener in Somerset three months earlier, that has made history. For it and the other songs of that East Anglian harvest were decisive in the formation of Vaughan Williams's personal style, since, as is well known, he did not get everything he wanted from a good academic training at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. The modality, the forthright lyricism, the Englishness of the buried heritage of English folk-song were what he needed in his struggle to free himself from the major and minor, tonic and dominant of German and Italian orthodoxy.

The first-fruits of the folk-song expeditions to East Anglia were the three Norfolk Rhapsodies, of which only the First in E minor has been allowed to survive, and the Symphonic Impression *In the Fen Country*, all of which date from about 1904. The first performance of this Norfolk Rhapsody is ascribed to 1906. The two chief tunes in it were collected from two King's Lynn fishermen on 9 January 1905. The first, 'The Captain's Apprentice', is a regular Peter Grimes episode of the rough life of the sea. The other tune belongs to a livelier ballad, 'On board a Ninety-Eight', which tells of a pressed youth who served his time in the Navy and ended as a Greenwich pensioner. It ends with the humorous couplet

> But, damme, I'm too old to sing,
> I'm nearly ninety-eight.

The Rhapsody would seem to have survived the composer's self-criticism because even so early there appear the finger-prints of his mature style which he would not feel conscious of having entirely outgrown—the opening rhapsodical solo for viola, the accompaniment to this first adumbration of the tune with consecutive triads, the striding basses in the middle section, a brief passage for brass chorus alone at the coda, which is a feature found in his later symphonies. The form of the work consists of the following sequence: a soft opening, the viola's quasi-improvisation which becomes 'The Captain's Apprentice', a development section in which some snatches of the tune are discussed and interrupted by an episode made up of a snatch of a 9/8 tune, not identifiable nor complete but folkish in character; the second tune 'On board a Ninety-Eight' is fully stated and is followed by a similar commentary attached to it in which some use is made of more sustained counter-melodies; the final section recalls 'The Captain's Apprentice' rather by way of reminiscence than restatement; the passage for brass just mentioned clinches it; the last page is an echo of the first. It is therefore a kind of binary movement, not too tight but quite coherent. The scoring has a charm of its own as well as being a suitable setting for the tunes. Perhaps because of its brevity the work survives from a time when more ambitious Rhapsodies were collapsing under the strain of attempts at symphonic development.

The Running Set

The Running Set, which is available for medium orchestra and in an arrangement for two-piano duet by Vally Lasker and Helen Bidder, is not merely an arrangement of folk-tunes but an actual accompaniment for folk-dancing. A note prefixed to the score explains that the Running Set is a dance found by Cecil Sharp in the Appalachian Mountains of America in 1917, which had however lost its tune—Sharp's earliest description of it says it was danced to stamping and clapping of onlookers. It was thought

by Sharp to be of British origin, for the mountain country was still isolated enough to have preserved many characteristics of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English life. The Appalachian folk-songs, for instance, often show features indicative of an earlier form of the same tune that Sharp had already collected in England: 'The Cuckoo' is an example of the same tune existing in a pentatonic and almost syllabic form in America and in a heptatonic form with tied notes to some syllables in Britain. But there was no direct relationship between the Running Set and any surviving country dance, and it had one feature unknown to English dancing but since become familiar in the American square dances—the Caller. Sharp however was convinced of its English parentage and was prepared to add it to the repertory of country dances regularly danced by the English Folk Dance Society, and for the purpose he fitted it with some suitable English dance tunes in 6/8 time.

The dance is a swift moto perpetuo with the Caller directing the sequence of figures by a rhymed and musical instruction *currente pede*.

The occasion of Vaughan Williams's arrangement was one of the annual New Year Festivals of the English Folk Dance Society at the Albert Hall in London. The tunes incorporated are 'Barrack Hill', 'The Blackthorn Stick', 'Irish Reel', and 'Cock o' the North', the last-named occurring at the point where the Caller needed a strong lead to a difficult new figure—a well-known air was to be provided to guide the dancers. 'This was accordingly done' says the Preface. 'The Blackthorn Stick' appears in collections of Irish traditional tunes but Vaughan Williams got it from the playing of Miss Elsie Avril, who in turn got it from the traditional fiddler of the Earsdon (Northumberland) sword-dancers.

The orchestration is for double woodwind, two each of horns and trumpets, no timpani but side-drum and triangle, a piano and strings.

English Folk-Song Suite

The loose method of stringing folk-tunes together in easy sequence without attempt at development is employed in the English Folk-Song Suite, which Vaughan Williams wrote originally for military band at the request of Colonel Somerville when he was Commandant of Kneller Hall. The medium does not call for much homogeneity or unity, its favourite stand-by in the repertory being the operatic pot-pourri. A string of folk-songs is therefore as good as a string of operatic arias, and there is no difficulty about keys: tonality at least the composer-compiler can organize without arrangement or transposition and he can in choosing his keys do something to provide structural unity, not to the extent to which key is the vital element in sonata form, but at any rate to the extent to which key relationship is effective in the structure of minuet and trio. So although the tunes are placed in juxtaposition without attempt to relate or combine them—at any rate until the last movement—their keys are disposed to enable the composer to have his first movement in one type of march form, his middle movement an intermezzo in simple ternary form, and his finale a march in the conventional form (with however only one trio).

The first march, which is founded on 'Seventeen come Sunday' and two other tunes, has a middle section which, being marked to be repeated, could be regarded as a trio, though it is in the tonic key and is if anything livelier than the main march tune. But the form of the whole is really what has been called by the pundits *Bogen* or bow form. We have a main march section in F minor (Dorian) with 'Seventeen come Sunday' played through twice for first subject and 'Pretty Caroline' in A flat for second subject. Then comes the middle section, a quasi-trio, but in F minor, a jig tune, *volkstümlich* and original not a folk-tune, duly marked to be repeated. When the recapitulation comes the second subject, Ex. 1, is heard first before 'Seventeen come Sunday' returns to finish the march.

The Intermezzo has for first subject the tune, also in F minor, 'My Bonny Boy' as noted by Vaughan Williams at King's Lynn in 1905; the middle section, 'allegretto scherzando', consists of 'Green Bushes' played twice; 'My Bonny Boy' returns in the bass.

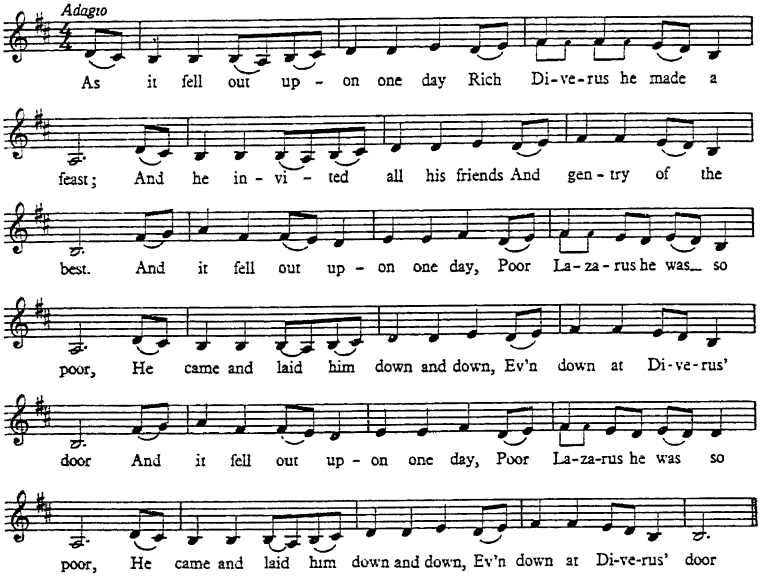
The finale is labelled March with a second caption 'Folk-Songs from Somerset'. The main tune is 'Blow away the morning dew', collected by Cecil Sharp, in B flat. This is followed by 'High Germany', a modal tune with a marching lilt. The trio, in this case so marked, consists of 'The tree so high' in C minor and 'John Barleycorn' given out on trombones in E flat. The trio is repeated, the March returns with 'Morning Dew' and 'High Germany'.

There is no attempt at development. It is a suite differing from the classical suite in avoiding the pure binary form and in using song tunes instead of dance tunes.

The transcription from military band to orchestral score was made in 1924 by Dr. Gordon Jacob, who is the chief liaison officer between bands and orchestras. The full score was not published till 1942.

Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'

In spite of its title this work is really a set of variations on a tune for which Vaughan Williams has obviously a great affection, as he has no less obviously for 'Searching for lambs'. There is an allusion to 'Dives and Lazarus' in *Hugh the Drover* and the five variants here elaborated are not really variants in the folk-song collector's sense, meaning different versions of the same tune turning up somewhere else, obviously the same tune, but obviously different in details of rhythm or contour or note-values, but are variations based on different forms of the tune. The composer notes in the score that 'these variants are not exact replicas of traditional tunes, but rather reminiscences of various versions

in my own collection and those of others'. The tune is indeed Protean. The form of it used here is this:

Parallel versions are innumerable: some of them are 'The Star of the County Down' in Ireland, 'Gilderoy' in Scotland, the carol 'Come all ye faithful Christians' in many parts of England, and 'The Murder of Maria Marten in the Red Barn' in Norfolk, where Vaughan Williams collected the version which is used as the fifth variant in this work. What seems to have happened is that the composer, recalling the tune without reference to any of these (and many more) sets of words, has modified it in transmitting it, just as a folk-singer does. They are in fact his own variants, except the last which is a variant in the strict scientific sense.

The tune as it appears in *English County Songs* was noted by A. J. Hipkins in Westminster and Earl's Court well back in the last century but without words. The ballad of 'Dives and Lazarus' —Dives more usually appears as Diverus—was however sung to it in those localities by street singers, as was ascertained by Lucy Broadwood before she printed tune and ballad together. The ballad itself goes back to the sixteenth century at least and is

mentioned by Fletcher in the comedy *Monsieur Thomas*. Between that time and the metamorphosis of the ballad into the Murder in the Red Barn the tune seems to have served mostly as a Christmas carol, though *English County Songs* prints two other variants as 'The Thresher' and 'Cold blows the wind'. Those interested in the new study practised more in America than here, the genealogy of tunes, can find some of the cousins and aunts of 'Lazarus' in the *Folk Song Journal* No. 7 (1905).

The layout of the work is for strings and harp, the strings being subdivided into two viola and two cello parts each, making seven in all. The tune is stated in rich harmony after an introduction of two bars and appended to the statement is a coda in imitative counterpoint. The first variant goes to triple time, which is not found in any extant version of the ballad, the texture is lighter, and the harp becomes a soloist with a running embroidery of the tune, but the tune itself does not appear, only its outline. The second variant is a mere sketch of the tune in three-bar phrases. The third variant is a real restatement in seven-bar phrases in D minor followed by a variation of itself in F minor. The fourth variant is livelier, more like a variation than a variant. The fifth variant is a true variant being, but for slight changes due to a vocal tune becoming an instrumental melody, the version collected by Vaughan Williams in 1905 to the words of 'Maria Marten'. It is played *tutti* and *forte*, and has a coda in which a cello solo leads to some quiet chords and one of those rising arpeggios that are a minor finger-print of the composer's style. This variant is like enough to Hipkins's tune to serve the purpose of a recapitulation.

The work was commissioned by the British Council among the works to represent English music at the World's Fair in America in 1939, where it had its first performance under Sir Adrian Boult. It was first played in England at a B.B.C. concert at the Colston Hall, Bristol, on 1 November 1939.

The Songs

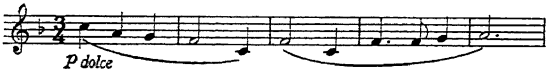
It is difficult for anyone who first learned the name of Vaughan Williams from the cover of a song and encountered his music at an impressionable age of life in 'The Roadside Fire', 'Silent Noon', 'Linden Lea', and 'Whither shall I wander' to bring critical objectivity to bear upon these early songs. They recall the voices of the dead who sang them; they evoke as nothing else the actual feeling of being not yet twenty and of not contemplating war as one of life's possibilities. From their overwhelming personal significance the only wider import that emerges is that they were different from the other music that was to be encountered in the first decade of the century. 'Normal' music of that time was couched in the harmonic language of Mendelssohn and Brahms; folk-song, newly discovered, sounded queer, with its flattened sevenths and strange minor modes; the music of Vaughan Williams, obviously good and in a class other than the all-pervasive royalty ballad, was a little queer too, contained wrong notes in the accompaniments but was strong stuff, fitted the open-air poetry of R. L. Stevenson, and indeed of the stronger-scented but still fresh air of Rossetti's 'Silent Noon', and above all belonged to us, to our generation, to Edwardians who had emerged from the Victorian Age. Even as a young man in songs which in retrospect appear only partly characteristic Vaughan Williams was an emancipator. Even before he had found himself—'Whither shall I wander' was composed in 1894, years before 'Bushes and Briars' was to set him on to *Neue Bahnen*, the new paths he was subsequently to tread—the voice was challenging.

'Linden Lea', though it too came before the discovery of folk-song in 1903—it is officially dated *c.* 1900—is a landmark. It is, is it not? the only true *Volkstümlichelied* in the corpus of English song. The words by William Barnes, who wrote in Dorset dialect, are described as folk-song, and Barnes probably, like

Burns, took a local song and tidied it up by attending to its rhymes and regularizing its spelling. The tune Vaughan Williams wrote for it is nearer in shape and behaviour to a traditional than to a folk-song—its form is AABA and the half-way cadence implies a dominant modulation, though Vaughan Williams sidesteps it. He also avoids the leading-note in his melody except for a single appearance as a passing-note, so that the tune is virtually hexatonic. Folk-song threw its shadow over this song as a coming event. Vaughan Williams's first published song, in a magazine called *The Vocalist* in 1902, was also a ballad-like setting of words by Barnes, 'Blackenmore by the Stour'. More than fifty years later Vaughan Williams returned to Barnes and set 'In the Spring', which he dedicated to the Barnes Society. Here again is the note of the fresh English countryside—the dialect inevitably evokes it—but this delicious song belongs less to the folk element in the composer than to the lyrical vein he tapped in 'See the chariot at hand' (which is detachable from *Sir John in Love*) and is even, though less obviously, related to 'Silent Noon'.

'Silent Noon' is one of the songs that won for itself an enormous popularity, like Ireland's 'Sea Fever' a generation later. It is in fact the second of a cycle of six sonnets by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which bears the title *The House of Life*. It deserves to survive as the others can hardly be expected to do, for it is a completely integrated song—as the others are not. The imagery of the poem is caught up into the music so that all the shimmer of a summer day comes out of the syncopated figure of the accompaniment and its stillness is curiously conveyed by the little to-and-fro tune that is half submerged in the chords of the pianist's right hand. And then the brief break into quasi-recitative preserves the form of the sonnet by destroying the illusion that it is a strophic song in quatrains. The first song of the cycle has an elaborate prelude and postlude and uses the swaying figure of accompaniment, which is common enough in all piano writing, but is a favourite device of Vaughan Williams for spelling out his harmonies, especially his 'added note' harmonies. 'Love's Minstrels', No. 3, is prophetic, though it is not successful. It begins with a sharp juxtaposition of triads, D major in its second position and F minor

in its root position. A passage *senza misura*, a feature of which the ultimate source was no doubt plainsong, is an early example of what becomes common in later works. 'Heart's Haven' is typical of its period and is correspondingly dated and outmoded now; in this respect it is comparable with some of Parry's *English Lyrics*, which now seem less characteristically Parry than ninetyish, or, in a too brusque judgement, a little 'cheap'. 'Death in Love' is an essay in the grandiose manner, but it too has a finger-print of the later style in its use of trumpet figures. The first strain of melody of No. 6, 'Love's Last Gift', is a portent of the simple diatonic formula that was to serve many a turn in the future—'For all the saints' (Sine nomine) of *The English Hymnal* and 'O taste and see' (Coronation Service, 1953), to name two instances.

Ex. 1.

In the two volumes of *Songs of Travel*, containing seven songs in all, the authentic Vaughan Williams appears with all the ninetyish atmosphere dispersed and proclaiming (as I have already confessed for myself) the new era. In 'The Vagabond' the open fifths and fourths appear and the striding bass. 'The Roadside Fire' produced something new in piano accompaniments which proved to be a teaser to the modest amateur pianist—and these songs were pounced on by the amateur who had heard Frederick Austin or Plunket Greene or John Coates sing them. The second set did not make quite so strong an appeal, and only 'The Infinite Shining Heavens' had the same open-air feeling of the first volume.

To the early period belongs 'L'amour de moy', set in an easy cross-rhythm of 6/4 against 4/4, which is the first of a small group of arrangements of French folk-songs, that includes an old French battle song, a *quête* song, and 'La ballade du Jesus Christ'. Two settings of old German songs, of which the texts were translated by Walter Ford, belong to the same year as these last, 1937. The arrangement of English folk-songs for piano accompaniment are innumerable. Like the less numerous arrangements as part-

songs for S.A.T.B., they establish the paradox that the more personal is the setting the more does it enhance the communal character of the tune; the colourless impersonal setting so far from preserving the integrity of the tune emaciates it. Brahms's settings of German folk-songs and Bartók's of Hungarian confirm what Vaughan Williams's settings of English folk-songs proclaim, that Ernest Walker's dictum [1] about arrangement tending 'to merge it in the general mass of musicians' music' is not the whole truth of the matter.

The *Four Hymns* for tenor voice—they were dedicated to Steuart Wilson—piano and viola obbligato belong to the group of works with apocalyptic or metaphysical words, of which the *Five Mystical Songs* (with words by George Herbert) were the immediate predecessor, the dates being 1911 for the *Five Mystical Songs* and 1912–14 for the composition of the *Four Hymns*, though they were not performed till 1920 after the war. The words are by Bishop Jeremy Taylor (1616), Isaac Watts (1674–1748), Richard Crashaw (1616–49), and of the final 'Evening Hymn' Robert Bridges, who translated 'O Gladsome Light' from the Greek of the Early Church. The first Hymn, 'Lord, come away', alternates between free declamation sustained only by chords and an *alla marcia* section that picks up the ideas of Palm Sunday and the Cleansing of the Temple. Consecutive chords of the sixth, to which the composer resorts by natural inclination in treating religious ideas, occur in the piano part. Indeed parallel sixths, to which are added some open consecutive fifths in the bass, constitute the whole of the accompaniment to No. 3, 'Come Love, come Lord'. Even before 1914 the mature style, wholly idiosyncratic, has thus developed. Other features of it are apparent in No. 2, 'Who is this fair one?', which is based on a pastoral tune for the viola in the Phrygian mode (with the sixth often sharpened in prominent positions):

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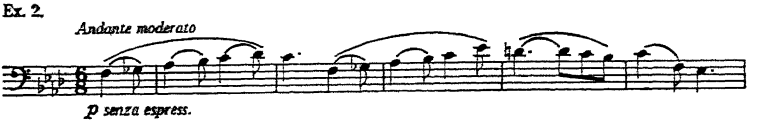
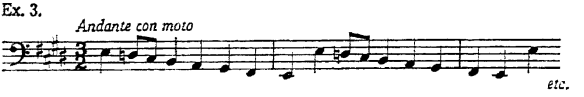

[1] *History of Music in England*, 3rd Edn. p. 362.

The harmony is determined by the mode; the viola has an independent part of increasing animation and melismatic excitement. The words seem to derive from *The Song of Songs* and the resemblance of the music to *Flos Campi*, still ten years in the future, is not confined to the scoring for a solo viola. In 'Evening Hymn', over an ostinato

Ex. 3.

which, it will be observed, is out of step with the bar accents, the viola introduces a chorale-like melody, which is borrowed by the voice for the words. The total effect is like that of one of Bach's figured chorales.

Song writing decreases after Vaughan Williams's middle years, and 1925 saw the publication of the last substantial batch of songs. These were *Three Poems* by Walt Whitman and *Four Poems* by Fredegond Shove, and *Two Poems* by Seumas O'Sullivan. Of these 'The Water Mill' is the best known. Miss Shove's poem is a kind of whimsical Theocritan idyll, and the music, with Schubertian accompaniment of wheel and water, by delaying the speed of the verse a little intensifies the listener's curiosity about what happens. 'The New Ghost' is also a narrative song, such as hardly invites musical setting. The O'Sullivan songs may at pleasure be sung unaccompanied, which means that the accompaniment is tenuous. The belated return to Whitman does not seem very fruitful.

One or two folk-songs were set for voice and violin, the medium whose striking possibilities Holst discovered in his four medieval songs for voice and violin. Following the idea up, Vaughan Williams set nine poems of Housman for the same combination, but they were not published (under the title 'Along the Field') till nearly thirty years after they were composed. The composer does not remember when that was, but Housman's *Last Poems*, from which five of the eight, formerly nine, songs are taken, came out in 1922. The set begins with the verse which the poet prefixed to the volume in which he said farewell to his muse,

'We'll to the woods no more'. The three *Shropshire Lad* poems are provided with straightforward diatonic tunes not far removed from the manner of folk-song. The most recondite of the set in vocal line and in its restless quaver accompaniment is the fifth, 'The sigh that heaves the grasses', and the biggest is 'Fancy's Knell', a declamatory song with free commentary from the violin. The violin writing is naturally the feature to which curiosity turns. In the Prologue it is an arabesque in a loose imitation of the vocal line; in 'Along the Field' it is a few bare double-stops. The 'half-moon' of No. 3 is depicted with swaying thirds in slow double-stops; in 'In the morning' the violin rides high like a bird. In the ballad-like 'Good-bye' it keeps up a lilting six-eight rhythm; in 'With rue my heart is laden' the two parts run in very simple counterpoint.

There are two quite different settings of 'Orpheus with his lute', one not later than 1903 and one some twenty years later. The early one, though fresh as a dewdrop and delightful, might be by any English composer so far as a distinct musical personality emerges from it, least of all the later Vaughan Williams. The later setting is simpler—it can be used as a school unison song—but it shows the later manner in its harmony with added notes to primary chords, producing the curdled sweetness that is to be found in the songs of *The Poisoned Kiss* and in the Serenade to Music. One need not extract too much significance from the superficially surprising fact that a composer can so far forget his own offspring as to come afresh to the same words. The second 'Orpheus' belongs to a set of three Shakespeare settings published about 1925.

Most of the part-songs are arrangements of folk or traditional songs or carols, but 'Sound Sleep' for female voices once had a vogue, along with Elgar's 'Fly, Singing Bird', as a competition test-piece. Of the folk-song arrangements the Five English Folk-Songs ('The Dark-eyed Sailor', 'The Spring-time of the Year', 'Just as the Tide was flowing', 'The Lover's Ghost', and 'Wassail Song') have become classics. Sung by the English Singers they carried the gospel of English folk-song into all lands. There are

some unison songs, which can optionally be sung in parts. 'England, my England', for instance, is called a choral song and can be sung by baritone solo, chorus in unison or chorus in parts, or a mixture of all three, with orchestra. The Six Choral Songs of 1940 are similarly for singing with orchestral accompaniment and have patriotic aspiration as their subject—the words of these songs 'to be sung in time of war' are all from Shelley. 'The New Commonwealth' from the same period belongs to the same class, though the words are by Harold Child and the music is borrowed from the Prelude to the film music of *49th Parallel*. Of the Shelley songs the last, 'A Song of the New Age', is the biggest and most striking: in it the ambiguity of the grouping of six crotchets to the bar is rhythmically exploited and the blazing contrast of A minor and A major made to express hopes of a fairer future, which the unquenchable spirit of man contrives to extract from the disaster of war.

Church Music

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS's chief gift to the Church is the work he did on the editing of *The English Hymnal* in 1906 and of *Songs of Praise* in 1925. For these hymn-books he composed many new tunes and converted some English traditional melodies into hymn-tunes. Both books went into revised editions in the early 'thirties and now contain much in common. The publication of *The English Hymnal* was a direct challenge to the easy sentimentality which the Church Music Society was founded to combat about the same time, and the Editor's taste and fresh outlook in the choice of tunes had far-reaching effects over and above his own contributions, which won general acceptance. Of these 'Sine nomine' to 'For all the saints' is the best known (*English Hymnal*, No. 641). Some of the others were specifically designed for unison singing, notably 'Abinger', a tune that rivals Holst's 'Jupiter' tune for 'I vow to thee, my country' (*Songs of Praise*, No. 319) though it is described, rightly, as a canticle rather than

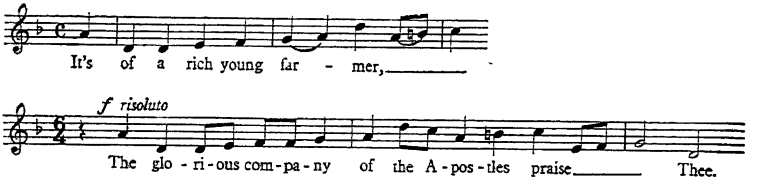
a hymn, and 'King's Weston' (*English Hymnal*, No. 368) for 'At the name of Jesus', which is in three-part harmony. The somewhat similar editorial work which Vaughan Williams did for *The Oxford Carol Book* enriched the Church indirectly, but it hardly counts as church music; it is really a product of the two interests, hymnody and folk-song.

Of church music in the specific sense, which means settings of the canticles, the chief is a complete service—Matins, Communion, and Evensong in D minor. It has a special feature which is very characteristic of the composer's sympathies—it contains a part for unison singing to be used as an obbligato to the normal layout for four-part choir and organ. It was designed for college chapels where the possibility of combining congregational singing with the elaborate settings of the canticles is not too hopelessly impracticable, and it was in fact written in the first instance for, and dedicated to, Dr. C. S. Lang and Christ's Hospital. The music is therefore forthright and relies for its expressiveness largely on non-chromatic key-changes to near and related keys, which sufficiently break up the too, too solid jubilation of the *Te Deum*, and allow the *Sanctus* in the Communion Service to take the form of a pastoral phrase in F major mounting to a climax of tone. A similar combination of a congregational unison with the elaboration of a setting suitable to liturgical requirements was attempted in the arrangement of the 'Old Hundredth' for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The suggestion that the congregation should be allowed active participation in the ceremony came from Dr. Vaughan Williams and was approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was accepted with enthusiasm by the congregation in Westminster Abbey but it came to grief because the nobility and gentry were not informed in the service book which they held in their hands that two of the verses were reserved for choir only—one with a trumpet descant. An earlier example of the same way of treating hymns ceremonially was the setting of 'All hail the power' to the tune 'Miles Lane' by William Shrubsole, to whom Vaughan Williams devotes an essay in his collection of prose writings.

There are two independent settings of *Te Deum*, each of them

'occasional'. The *Te Deum* in G was composed for the enthronement of Dr. Cosmo Lang as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1928; it contains many unison passages but also others for the antiphony of Cantoris and Decani with organ. The *Festival Te Deum Founded on Traditional Themes* was composed for the Coronation of King George VI and has therefore an orchestral as well as an organ accompaniment. There are two recognizable folk-tunes, one of the ballad type with a Dorian tune like this:

Ex. 1.



The other at 'When Thou tookest upon Thee' turns off into 'Dives and Lazarus'.

There are no anthems in the ordinary sense, only a number of motets, mostly composed for special occasions, such as 'The Souls of the Righteous' composed for the Dedication Service of the Battle of Britain Chapel in Westminster Abbey in 1947.

The Mass in G minor is liturgical in intention and has been sung in both the Roman and the English rites but it has also achieved a wider use. In general Vaughan Williams stands outside the Anglican tradition—he held only one organist post for a short time—and his attitude to church and cathedral is not that of those whose business is to maintain a ritual 'daily throughout the year' but is infused with a kind of democratic idealism that finds its expression in special occasions, public ceremonial, and in concourses of the people.

Dramatic Works

Introduction

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS'S works for the stage are eight, or, if the television screen is a stage, nine, five operatic and four choreographic. The five operas are sharply distinct in character and category. *Hugh the Drover* calls itself a romantic ballad opera, though containing no spoken dialogue. *The Poisoned Kiss* calls itself a romantic extravaganza and uses spoken dialogue in the manner of French *opéra comique* or English ballad opera as the classification is normally understood. *Sir John in Love* is not comic, but comedy, opera. *Riders to the Sea* is music-drama, as Wagner defined the term. *The Pilgrim's Progress* calls itself a morality and uses continuous music in the manner of music-drama though without the conscious manipulation of leitmotive.

Vaughan Williams evades the word 'ballet' in connexion with his scores composed for dancing. *Job* is a masque, so is *The Bridal Day*, of which the scenario is founded on Spenser's *Epithalamion*, a work composed for and first produced on the television screen in 1953. *A Christmas Carol* or *On Christmas Night* is musically defined as a quodlibet on Christmas tunes. Only on the score of *Old King Cole* does the word 'ballet' appear unashamed: it is even a 'ballet for orchestra'. In all the choreographic works the type of dancing envisaged for them is conceived in terms of folk-dance steps, not of the classical ballet, of the flat-heeled slipper, not the blocked toe, with hints from morris and country dancing in the composition of the figures and the *enchaînements*.

Old King Cole

The ballet *Old King Cole*, like the overture to *The Wasps*, was a product of the composer's Cambridge affiliations. The Cambridge Branch of the English Folk Dance Society had had its taste whetted

for folk-ballet-dancing by participation in Cyril Rootham's opera *The Two Sisters*. The President of the Branch was Dr. Vaughan Williams of Trinity, who was ready to provide a score for an independent ballet. The scenario was provided by Mr. Vulliamy who stiffened the nursery rhyme with a dash of history: King Cole of Colchester had a daughter Helena, who married the Emperor Constantine and became the mother of Constantine the Great. In the story of the ballet she is supposed to have returned home on a visit bringing as a present for her father a wonderful new pipe for him to smoke. The hookah is made to work with appropriate choreographic ritual but soon breaks down, so that the king is driven for consolation to his familiar bowl. The fiddlers three come into the story because the Empress Helena was musical and consents to award a prize to the best of them. Like other virtuosi they have different temperaments: the first is a gipsy, the second a dreamer, and the third a comfortable extravert who can set feet dancing. King Cole, like King James II, likes foot-wagging music and awards the prize without consulting his daughter, who would like to console the dreamer. She throws him a rose as the general company files into the banqueting hall but he goes on with his dreaming and his playing.

The music begins with the tune of Old King Cole—harmonized with those consecutive fifths in the bass, which had by this time become something of a mannerism. Most of the *pas d'action* is set to good square measures in common time or jigs in 6/8. The tune for the lighting and smoking of the pipe is not particularly characteristic:

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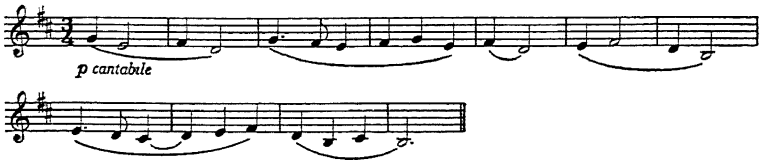
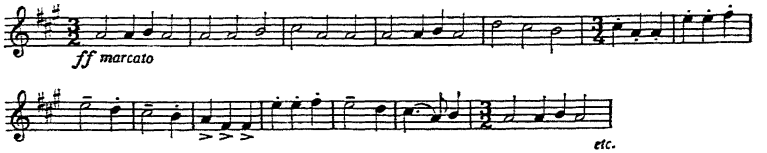

When the fiddlers come on they play three folk-tunes. The first fiddler accompanies some wild men dancing a jig to the morris dance tune 'Go and enlist for a sailor'. The more romantic

second fiddler plays 'Bold Young Farmer' (not the well-known East Anglian tune of Dr. Vaughan Williams's published collection but one from his manuscript collection). The vigorous third fiddler plays 'The Jolly Thresherman' and draws also on 'The Fisher Laddie' and 'The Oyster Girl'. One other tune which is given to a unison chorus to sing without words is worth quoting, as it reproduces a change of rhythm found in some folk-dances and bears a superficial resemblance in structure to the Chorale St. Antonii in Brahms's Haydn Variations with its alternation of five-bar and four-bar phrases:

Ex. 2

The ballet was originally performed on 5 and 7 June 1923, in Neville's Court at Trinity College, Cambridge. It has once or twice been revived since but neither it nor its music, apt though it is for its happy-go-lucky, open-air purpose, is of great importance in the composer's output.

On Christmas Night

Nor indeed is the other folk-dance ballet *On Christmas Night*, which is musically described as a quodlibet on Christmas tunes, except to show how a symphonic texture can be made out of folk-tunes. The recalcitrance of folk-song to symphonic development soon became apparent when composers of the various nationalist schools of Europe strove to incorporate traditional tunes into symphonic composition. They often called such compositions rhapsodies when their unsymphonic character was too palpable to justify the title of symphony for them, and Constant Lambert's famous aphorism was an extreme summary of the incompatibility

of folk-melody with symphony. But by a looser counterpoint, based in the last resort on madrigal technique, in which the tunes are strung together like a daisy chain, with an overlap or a bit of invertible counterpoint or a blunt juxtaposition or mere emotional congruity to bind them, coherent rhapsodies, in the old Greek sense of songs stitched together, can be made. The Bach family, we are told, was fond of the practice of this kind of free-for-all counterpoint, which is aptly called in decent Latin *quodlibet*—what you like.

In 1912 Vaughan Williams produced a Fantasia on Christmas Carols. In 1921 he wrote a second Christmas fantasia which was produced at Cecil Sharp House on 29 December 1935 as a folk-dance ballet with the title, *On Christmas Night*, borrowed from Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. Its intervening history is as follows: Adolf Bolm, one of the original dancers of Diaghilev's company, prepared a scenario for which Dr. Vaughan Williams wrote the music. Bolm took it off to America and indeed produced *On Christmas Night* in Chicago shortly after. The music was heard in London once at a concert of the New English Music Club conducted by Mr. Anthony Bernard at the Park Lane Hotel on 17 December 1929. The composer then put the score by in a drawer, where it remained for some years until for his publishers he cleared out the buried treasure from the drawer. Thence the score passed to Mr. Douglas Kennedy of the English Folk Dance and Song Society for him to consider the possibility of recreating a ballet for it. The new choreography was largely his work but the production of the ballet on the open floor of Cecil Sharp House fell to Mr. Frederick Wilkinson, who had done much in the way of producing music-drama in Liverpool. Mr. Wilkinson turned the disability of working without curtains or a stage to positive advantage by an ingenious use of the minstrels' gallery and of vistas through open doors; he thereby enhanced the visionary character of the ballet, whose theme is Scrooge's dream of what might have been, and made it chime in with the music which is a reverie started by a snatch of 'The First Nowell'. Miss Imogen Holst conducted this first performance of the ballet in England.

The ballet falls into four scenes though the music is continuous; the episodes are the components of a dream. The scenario is as follows:

The miser Scrooge dreams that he is taken to revisit the scenes of his youth. In the first stage of his conversion he sees a Christmas Eve Party at the Fezziwig's house where he was an apprentice. The guests go home before midnight. The watchman goes his rounds. The Wise Men and Shepherds pass through the night on their way to Bethlehem. Scrooge sees a children's party in the home of the woman he might have married. His conversion completed, the story ends with a vision of the Nativity.

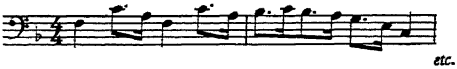
The short Prelude dwells for a moment on a characteristic phrase unmistakably suggestive of 'The First Nowell'.

Ex. 1.

This is a motto theme embodying the spirit of Christmas and reappearing at intervals throughout the work. It is followed by voices offstage singing 'God rest you merry' (played by the violas when the work is given in concert form).

Scene I introduces the characters of Scrooge's dream. A solo bassoon plays the country dance tune 'Tink a Tink', which is not in Playford's *The Dancing Master* but was collected by Cecil Sharp from traditional dancers.

Ex. 2.



While this is played with increasing orchestration the characters pass across the stage: they include the Three Wise Men on their way to Bethlehem to the music of the Prelude which is repeated (Ex. 1), and Scrooge watches the whole procession, trying to attach himself to it and so to take part in the vivid reality of his dream.

Across the slowly fading notes of 'The First Nowell' breaks the country dance tune 'Haste to the Wedding' in quick time, again

on the bassoon. This is the sign for Fezziwig's party, which occupies Scene II, to begin. 'In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke.' Mr. Fezziwig salutes his guests to the stately tune 'Jamaica', which is not harmonized but set against flowing two-part counterpoint.

'Putney Ferry' is the first dance in which the Misses Fezziwig and their six suitors take part. A ping on the triangle announces a change: the 'boy from over the way' dances a solo Morris Jig to an amalgam of the tunes used by folk-dancers for 'Bacca Pipes', which are all variants of 'Greensleeves'. When this is done the fiddler re-tunes his instrument—'like fifty stomach-aches', Dickens says. The next dance is 'The Triumph'.

'But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley". Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who *would* dance and had no notion of walking.' At last however the clock strikes twelve and brings 'Sir Roger' to an end. The Christmas motive of the Prelude, which recurs like a rondo theme, is heard again to recall the more tender feelings associated with Christmastide. A baritone voice is heard singing the Watchman's song as he goes his rounds, and the carol 'God rest you merry' appears once more in the orchestra against the suggestion of bells derived from the phrase in 'The First Nowell' (Ex. 1).

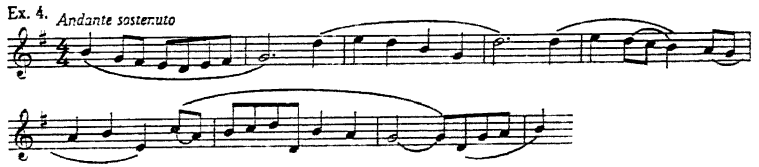
The third scene is all carols, while the Kings of the East and the vigilant Shepherds pass to Bethlehem. The music consists of contrapuntal interlacing of two tunes—'On Christmas Night', which the composer used in his other Fantasia on Christmas Carols, and 'The First Nowell'. Both are played together, the one under the other with harmony that fits them both to make four parts for strings, but the wind instruments soon join in and pass from one tune to the other as though they were indistinguishable and inseparable. There is a little coda in which the following little tune

is played three times, first by clarinet, then by horn, and finally by violoncello:

Ex. 3.

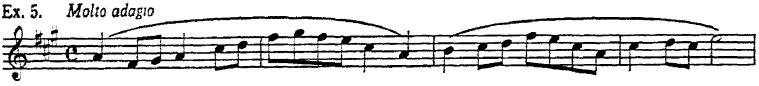
This is one of the less familiar tunes to the 'Cherry Tree Carol' (cf. *Oxford Book of Carols*, No. 66, third tune).

Scene IV opens with a vision of a girl playing a piano. The orchestra is silent and what she plays is this version of the best of all English love-songs, 'The Seeds of Love'.

Ex. 4. *Andante sostenuto*

In concert performance this reverie is transferred to the harp, and in either case the strings soon surround it with an aura of golden sound. The girl is the one whom Scrooge might have married. In Dickens the Ghost of Christmas Past first recalls the dialogue in which this dowerless girl releases Scrooge from his engagement to marry her and then, going on a few years, shows her as the mother of a boisterous family in the centre of a children's party. 'The Seeds of Love' is the musical and stage equivalent of that dialogue; the party is announced by the outbreak on full orchestra of 'The Queen's Birthday', which is, like 'Jamaica' and 'Putney Ferry', a Playford tune (though there is a reference to 'Putney Ferry' in a poem published a century before Playford's time).

'Hunsdon House' and 'Black Nag' optionally carry on the party. No provision is made in the score for 'Black Nag', which the composer directs to be played by a solo violin. 'Hunsdon House', however, is set for solo by flute and oboe in alternation, against a counterpoint in quaver motion from a solo viola, over a bass by a solo violoncello, with the harp doubling this accompaniment. 'The Queen's Birthday' is resumed only to bring the revelry to an end. There is a pause and a string quartet sends the children to bed

with the 'White Paternoster'—'Matthew, Mark and Luke and John, Bless the bed that I lie on'—transformed into A major from the better known version in the Phrygian mode which Baring-Gould published in *Songs of the West*.

Ex. 5. *Molto adagio*

' The Evening Prayer' is followed by the motto theme Ex. 1, with voices singing a verse of 'The First Nowell' complete. And now that the whole tune has been given the orchestra seizes upon it and combines it with itself in canon, with 'On Christmas Night' and with 'The Cherry Tree' (Ex. 3). And as before the tunes run into each other on the same instrument. There is a passage, for instance, about sixteen bars long in which the following dispositions may be discovered: the flute is playing 'On Christmas Night' but eight bars later is found to have taken over 'The First Nowell'. 'The First Nowell' on its part goes on like a ground bass (lower strings and bassoon) underneath 'The Cherry Tree', which clarinet, trumpet, and second violin keep to the fore. The first violin meantime is even more fickle than the flute: it holds a dominant pedal for a few bars, then tries a snatch of 'The Cherry Tree' and finally joins the flute in 'The First Nowell'. This favoured and favourite tune has the last word since the whole orchestra, harp, trombone, and all, together with bells and voices offstage, take it up as a hymn to the Nativity, which is shown in tableau on the stage. Scrooge's conversion is complete, for this scenario does not require him to be pursued by two more ghostly visitants as Dickens's story does, and the music dies away on the motto (Ex. 1).

Quodlibet seems to be the right formal description for this way of treating tunes that are by nature recalcitrant to symphonic development but which are nevertheless capable of providing symphonic texture if treated with a proper understanding of their nature.

Hugh the Drover

Vaughan Williams's first opera belongs to the period dominated by the Sea and London Symphonies. For it was begun in 1911 and its composition appears to have been largely concurrent with the London Symphony and to have been completed by 1914, although it did not achieve performance until 1924. Its theme is the life of freedom and the open air which had attracted the composer in his early settings of R. L. Stevenson ('The Roadside Fire', for instance) and Walt Whitman (in the Finale of the Sea Symphony, for instance). Its musical features belong to the early manner with the copious flow of tunes (as in the London Symphony), the quotation and near-quotation of folk-songs and the use of parallel harmonies. An episode which he added for the special performance to celebrate the jubilee of the Royal College of Music in 1933 shows, for all the attempt to match the rest in simplicity and forthrightness, that the first period ended with the war and gave place to new developments in the second period which began with the Pastoral Symphony of 1922.

Hugh the Drover, or Love in the Stocks is described as a romantic ballad opera in two acts. It is not a ballad opera in the technical sense of containing spoken dialogue like *opéra comique* or *Singspiel*, which are French and German equivalents of English ballad opera. Its texture, though spare, is continuously symphonic and there are even a number of recurring leitmotivs of the Wagnerian kind. But there are many self-contained songs, for which the term 'ballad' is not wholly inappropriate. The word 'romantic' is an important qualification, for most English ballad operas, at any rate until one comes to Edward German's *Merrie England*, though they may deal with the course of true love running rough or smooth, have a drier tang, often satirical, as in the first of them, *The Beggar's Opera*, and in the corpus of Gilbert and Sullivan operas. The libretto by Harold Child makes no attempt at character study; it is concerned with situations illuminated by music; the characters are recognizable types but are not individualized, and on the whole they are,

though not allegorical, embodiments of typically English points of view. The text of the simple plot is written in good, easy plain English that readily drops into rhymed verse. If the sentiment suddenly becomes inflated, as when the rustic lovers conceive of themselves as kings and queens, this is only an exercise of the licence allowed by ballad opera when it drops the plain speech of dialogue for the singing of lyrics. The story is very simple and, it must be confessed, sentimental, as the simpler kinds of romance often are. The second act contains a few awkward dramatic corners to negotiate, though the release from the stocks has been simplified from the first version of the plot, in which Hugh was released by Mary but had to get back in again—they now both hide together behind the stocks. The opera has indeed had considerable revision since its first performance on 7 July 1924, in the theatre of the Royal College of Music. The love duet that took place in the stocks has been removed to the end where it takes the place of a harangue from Hugh on magnanimity and the open air which has now virtually disappeared. The extra scene composed for the 1933 revival was interpolated before the beginning of the second act. It was welcomed as an improvement at the time, but it has been discarded in subsequent productions at Sadler's Wells Theatre and is marked in the vocal score with an asterisk denoting that its inclusion is optional.

The original performances in the Parry Theatre at the Royal College of Music were conducted by S. P. Waddington—one of them was attended by Queen Mary. Almost immediately it went into the repertory of the British National Opera Company which performed it a week later in public at His Majesty's Theatre under Malcolm Sargent and thence it was taken on tour. It is a little short for a normal evening's theatrical entertainment and is sometimes provided with a curtain-raiser, when something suitable can be found. The librettist, Harold Child, had for a year or two been on the stage, for eight years been dramatic critic of *The Observer* and for twenty-five years a leader writer on the staff of *The Times*. He was the author of many of the fourth leaders in that journal and of many essays, mostly on literary subjects, in *The Times Literary Supplement*. Bruce Richmond was instrumental in

bringing librettist and composer together; their collaboration was sealed by the joint dedication of the opera to Hugh Allen—hence its first performance at the Royal College of Music.

The scene of the opera is placed in the Cotswolds—author and composer were both Gloucestershire born—in the time of the Napoleonic war. 'About 1812', say the stage directions, and then, with more particularity, 'Monday, April 30 and Tuesday, May 1' for the time of the action. The small Cotswold town—it might be Northleach or Stow on the Wold—is subject to the scares of war-time including spy-mania.

Hugh (*Tenor*) is a drover engaged in collecting horses for the British army in the French wars. The author's own synopsis of the story is as follows:

At a country fair, Mary, daughter of the Constable of the Town, and betrothed by him to a brutal young Butcher, meets an interesting stranger, who quietly derides her dutiful resolution to sacrifice her heart to her father's will. This stranger is a Drover, engaged in collecting horses for the English army in the French wars. Mary and he fall in love with each other at sight, and the Butcher's only solution of the difficulty being to kill his rival, a fight is arranged, with the girl as the prize. In spite of the Butcher's foul fighting the Drover wins, whereupon the Constable and the Butcher plot a mean revenge by declaring the Drover to be a spy in the pay of Bonaparte.

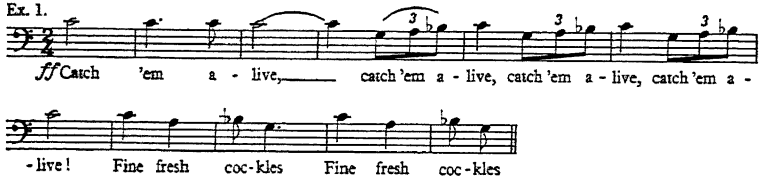
The hour before dawn on the following morning sees the Drover in the stocks, awaiting the arrival of soldiers, who have been sent for, to take him. Mary, having stolen the keys of the stocks, slips out of her father's house and sets her lover free; but all their efforts to escape together are frustrated. In desperation, Mary hits on a bold device. Bidding the Drover get back into the stocks, she imprisons herself beside him, and is thus discovered by the awakened townsfolk, her feet in the stocks, her body clasped in the arms of a vagabond and a spy. Her disgrace is complete. Her father disowns her; the Butcher insults her grossly. So far as her duty goes she is, therefore, free. But now the bugles are heard; the soldiers have come. The Butcher confidently expects a triumph over his foe. It is the Drover who triumphs. The soldiers know him well for a gallant true-blue Briton; their Sergeant owes him his very life. He is instantly set free, and the Sergeant, angry at having been robbed of a night's rest for nothing, secures a sturdy

recruit by the simple process of marching the Butcher away with him. Nothing remains but for the Drover, having roundly told the Constable and others what he thinks of them, to ride off with his bride.

The situations in this story round which music can crystallize, music which will proclaim in every note, the composer being who he is, the heart-beat of England, are therefore the fair, the boxing match, love in the stocks, the bringing in of the May, Mary's stratagem which is the most artificial, the most conventional and theatrical part of the piece, the 'pressing' of the Butcher, and the duet of love and the open road.

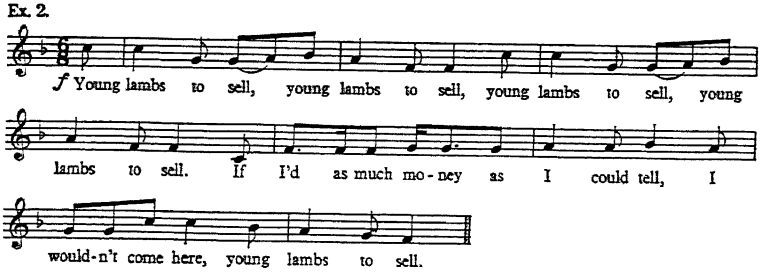
There is a brief prelude 'allegro vivacissimo' in a bustling 2/4 time and the curtain goes up on a fair on the outskirts of the town with a cheap-jack's voice as the first to be heard. The chorus take him up, for this is a folk-opera and the chorus is an active dramatis persona. Then come in the itinerant vendors hawking their wares to traditional street cries. These are cockles

Ex. 1.



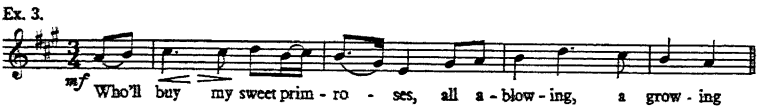
toy lambs

Ex. 2.

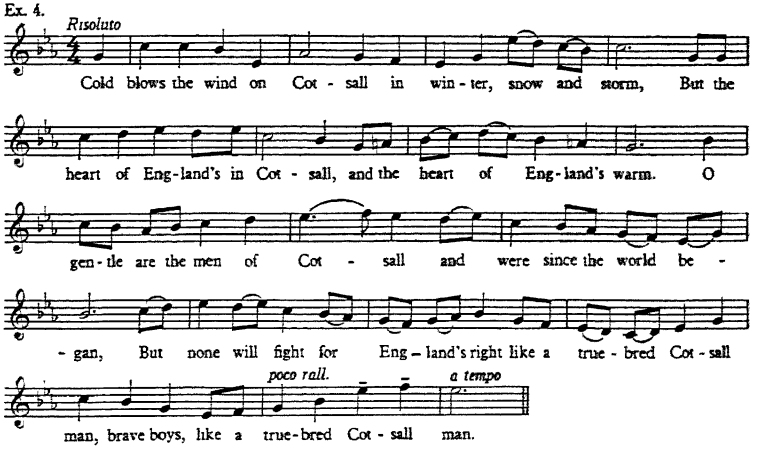


and primroses

Ex. 3.

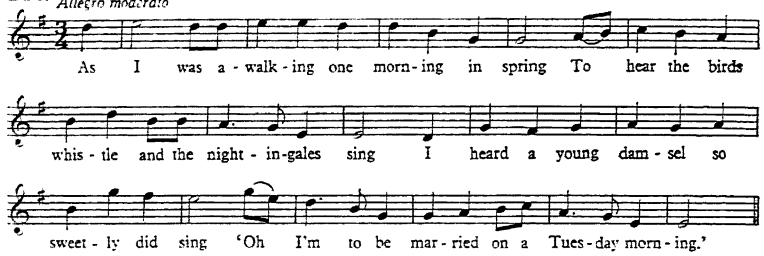


Showman, trumpeter, drummer and juggler and dancing-girl enter and move through the crowd, which keeps on the move by means of a steady movement in the bass, quite in the manner of *The Bartered Bride*. The Showman gets the first real song, very much in the ballad manner. This should be quoted as an example of Vaughan Williams's ability to write a tune that might be, but is not, a folk-tune, and also as an example of organic melody without formal repetitions of phrase to make a pattern, like 'The Seeds of Love', in which each phrase generates its successor, and produces a completely satisfactory feeling of unity.

Ex. 4.

The second verse, for this is a strophic song, drops a hint about Boney, which the crowd takes up in a four-part version of the last bars of the tune followed by the music of the overture as they move round the fair in an ensemble of pedlars and townsmen. The next event is the arrival of the ballad seller, of the tribe of Autolycus, who offers broadside ballads, pretty ballads, ballads gay and ballads sorrowful, love-songs and songs of death. Among them is discovered 'The murder of Maria Marten all on the red barn floor' and the orchestra murmurs a bar or two of the appropriate tune, namely 'Dives and Lazarus', to which that ballad was sung (see p. 234). We must not mind the anachronism—Maria Marten's murder took place on 18 May 1824. However, the Ballad Singer

chooses the love-song 'Tuesday Morning', which Vaughan Williams took from Sharp's collection:

Ex. 5. *Allegro moderato*

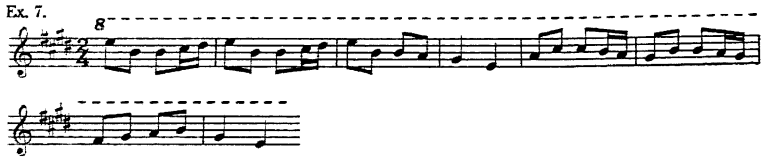


During the singing Mary (*Soprano*) enters and both looks at and listens to the song. It is too much for her and she bursts into tears, for its marriage refrain touches her closely. Aunt Jane (*Contralto*) and the Constable (*Bass*) now appear on the scene, followed in turn by John the Butcher (*Baritone*), who has a truculent song in which to show his character, but he melts a little (into triplets and a counter-tune in G flat major, which is after all a good deal from him) as he invites his fiancée to parade the fair with him. But Mary declines and there is some bickering, with the crowd interfering until the Constable comes forward again. With him is usually associated the motive

Ex. 6.

The agitation is interrupted by the arrival of the morris dance team to pipe and tabor accompaniment. Their tune is the Processional

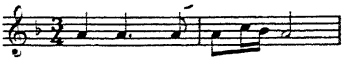
Ex. 7.



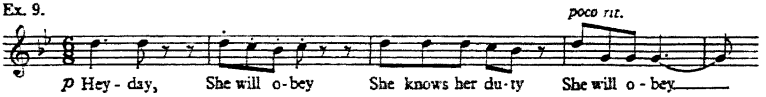
As the chorus takes up the tune a counterpoint of a jig in 6/8 is put against it.

The chorus goes off, marking the end of what is virtually the first scene and leaving Aunt Jane and Mary alone. To Mary's

confession of fear about marrying John Aunt Jane rejoins with a little song about the sorrows of being a lonely old maid, of which the recurrent motif is

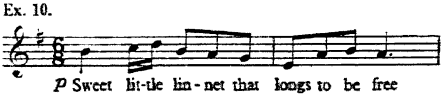
Ex. 8.

Mary retorts that she would rather be alone than marry the Butcher but says she will go through with it and do her duty. Her last words are heard by Hugh who has strolled into the square and is mending his whip. He takes her up on them:

Ex. 9.

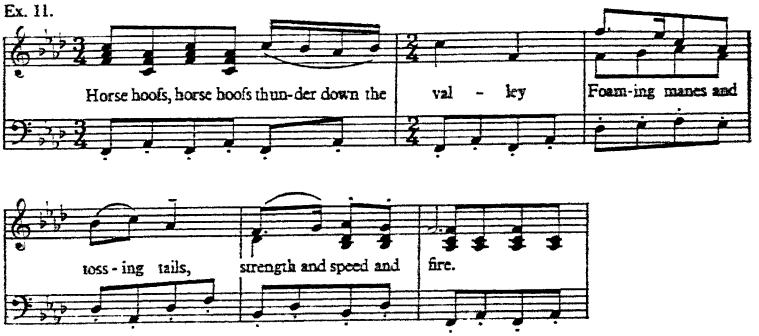


There is a challenge in them and Aunt Jane is quick to rebuke his impertinence. Unabashed he continues the provocation in a song comparing Mary to a caged linnet. It is this succession of strophic songs in regular metre that provides some warrant for the designation 'ballad' opera. The opening strain gives a fair idea of what the song is like:

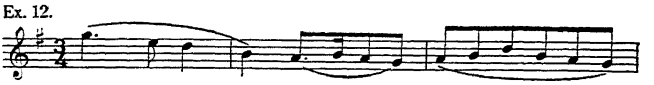
Ex. 10.

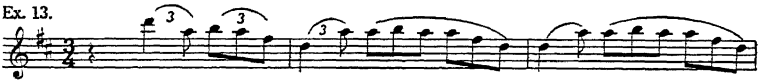


and there is an interlude of bird song between the verses. The contact of youth and maid has been accomplished. Hugh makes himself known in a ballad of the open road:

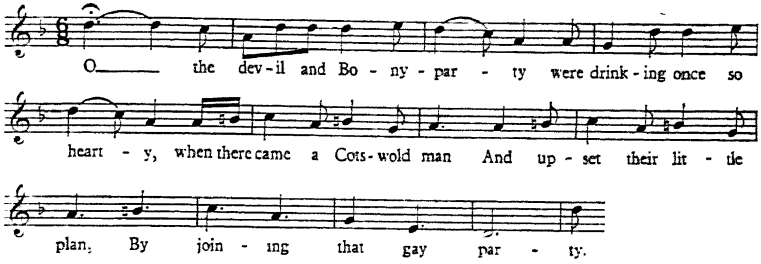
Ex. 11.

This drumming rhythm is indicative not only of horse-beats, but of the road, as in the song 'The Roadside Fire', and of the general air of the Cotswolds, for it pervades the prelude and the movements of the crowd.

This is the most extended set-piece in the opera. It completely captures Mary, who yields in an arioso, hesitant yet confident in its alternation of 6/8 and 3/4 time. Their new life together is proclaimed less in what they sing to each other at the moment of their recognition of their fate, in spite of the high notes, she on a B flat, he on an A flat, than in the orchestral passage which follows, based on the theme which is to recur at the end of the opera:

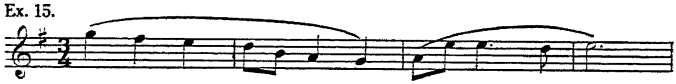
Ex. 12.

The next scene, though not designated as such, is introduced by the Constable's reappearance, accompanied by Ex. 6. He asks Hugh what all this nonsense is about but has no time for an answer before the Showman proposes a prize-fight as part of the fun of the fair. This is Hugh's chance: he will fight John not for the twenty-pound prize but for his bride. The prospect of a fight is musically depicted by means of a moto perpetuo from the strings

Ex. 13.

running along over pounding chords, one-two-three without a dotted note or anything but crotchets on the horizon for the duration of the round, together with ejaculations from the chorus, which work up the excitement of anticipation. There are however yet to come before the fight itself the formalities which are handled by the Showman in a ballad of Bonyparty—this is his second song of this rousing kind that he has had already, and the sixth set strophic song of the opera so far.

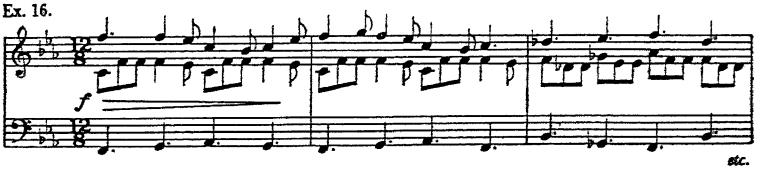
Ex. 14.



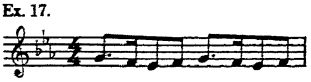
Hugh raises the stakes from twenty pounds to Mary's hand—her heart is his already—and a big ensemble, in which the divided sympathies of the crowd, Mary's reluctance, the Constable's outraged pride, Aunt Jane's sententiousness, create a hubbub dominated by a great swinging melody, a variant of Ex. 12,

Ex. 15.

which is repeated and extended over swinging arpeggios.

The fight is conducted in a combination of rhythms:

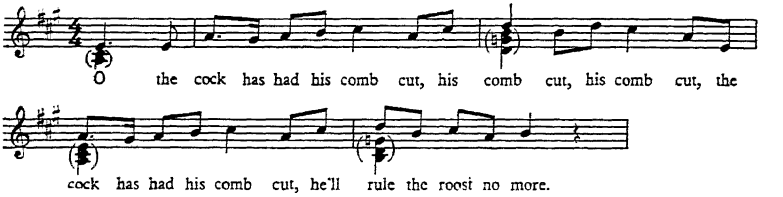
Ex. 16.

with the chorus making interjections and the woodwind subsequently playing another rhythm:

Ex. 17.



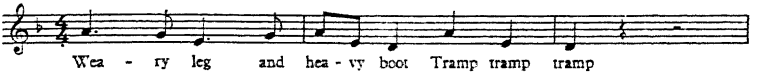
When Hugh gives John, who has been fighting foul, the knock-out blow, the chorus breaks into a song that is hard to distinguish from a Northumbrian pipe tune, especially as it is harmonized so

as to suggest the small pipe scale. The tune belongs to the family of 'The Keel Row':

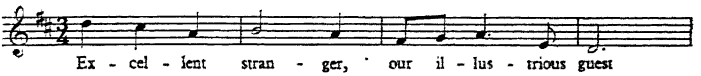
Ex. 18.

However, the rejoicing is cut short by John's counter-move of calling Hugh a French spy, alleging the ample stake money as evidence. The Constable (Ex. 6) becomes important and the Showman leads the basses in a repeat of the Bonyparty ballad (Ex. 14). The fickle crowd cries 'Spy, spy, spy!' and Hugh is arrested. The curtain comes down to the same music that accompanied its going up—the bustle of the little town.

The additional scene, which the composer added in 1933, permits a filling out of the character of John in three songs, and some dialogue, a touch or two more of ridicule of the Constable, another song for Aunt Jane and a deepening of the lovers' passion in a song divided between Hugh and Mary. There is dramatically a certain amount of feint and plotting on the part of Mary and her Aunt. The texture, weight, and tempo of the music is consistent with what was written twenty years before, but the idiom has changed and we hear something that might have come out of *The Poisoned Kiss* and the Serenade to Music. Its inclusion lengthens the opera to a more useful theatrical duration; formally it serves to provide an intermezzo between the two main structural blocks of the opera, but dramatically it holds up, inevitably, the development of the action.

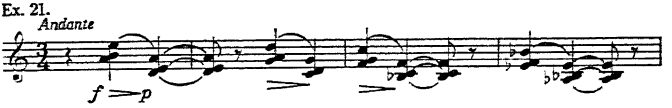
The scene is the market place of the town in the afternoon following the events of the morning of the first act. We see the Constable's house, an inn, the Turnkey's house, the town pump, and the stocks. Enter to a trudging 'alla marcia' prelude John, the prisoner and an escort; the key is a bleak D minor and there are more bare fifths than in Act I. To these clop-clop strains John sings a short stanza in three-bar phrases:

Ex. 19.

but he then rather unexpectedly develops a vein of irony in D major and four-bar phrases thus:

Ex. 20.

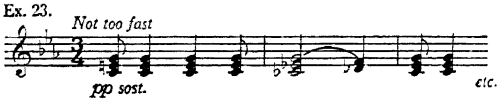


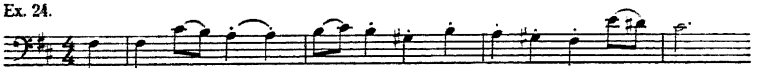
He warms to his sarcasm in a quicker measure (still in D major) and Hugh is clapped into the stocks. The Constable enters but is beginning to have doubts about the legality of what is going on and to wonder what evidence he can tender to the military authorities who have been summoned from Gloucester. His music is confused with intrusive intervals of the second, at first major, then chromatically minor, descending in sequences of waning resolution. Ex. 21 is not first-period Vaughan Williams but it shows the Constable's frame of mind:

Ex. 21.

The crunches turn from crotchets into quavers as his doubts nag him more and more. John however will have none of them and declares that the money found on Hugh is enough in itself to convict him. While the Constable and John argue Mary approaches with a stratagem—she will buy the stranger's release by renouncing her love for him and will at once be a good obedient girl. She steels herself to play a part by musing tenderly in the key of seven flats, but in addressing her father she uses a simpler key more suited to his intelligence, G major. The orchestra however betrays her real frame of mind, which John is not slow to detect, in love music that might have come from *The Poisoned Kiss*:

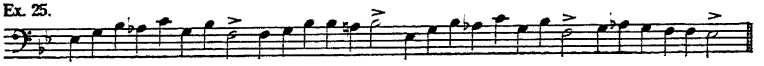
Ex. 22. *Allegretto sostenuto*

Mary's denial of her love naturally distresses Hugh and the argument goes on in solos in turn all round, duet, trio, and choral ensemble. But John is adamant; the plot has failed. Then comes a song divided between Hugh and Mary of considerable pathos, indeed though one cannot say it is out of scale or style, this passage with its throbbing accompaniment (which harks back to 'Silent Noon') could sustain the weight of a more heroic action in a grander opera.

Ex. 23.

Mary is hesitant in C minor and much shifting of tonality, Hugh constant and confident in a firm C major. They bid farewell to each other; the market place empties leaving Hugh in the stocks; and the orchestra continues to portray what is going on in his mind: there is a passionate strain of melody before the fall of the curtain and after it a recurrence of Ex. 23, followed by Ex. 22. Then comes the sound of the May-day carol, for we have been carried forward by these orchestral musings far into the night. The Maying Song is heard on the bassoon, as yet incomplete,

Ex. 24.

This version comes from Fowlmere near Cambridge and was collected in 1898.

The music now runs on into the original second act, now called Act II, Scene 2. The scene is the same—in the market square—but the time is very early morning before it is light. The windows of the inn however still show lights, and sounds of laughter and singing every now and again emerge to show that the men of the town after the excitements of the day are making a night of it. The church clock chimes the Psalm tune 'York' and strikes four. The tune 'York'

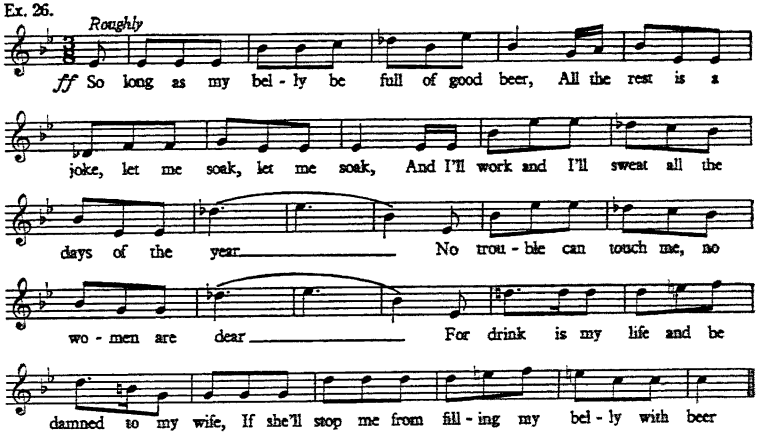
Ex. 25.

was used by Ravenscroft for Psalms xxvii and lxvi in his *The Whole Booke of Psalmes*, which he published in 1621. He had taken it from a Scottish Psalter of 1615, where the tune is called 'The Stilt'. No one has ever fathomed how hymn-tunes and dance-tunes get their names. The little Cotswold town was fortunate to possess a chime containing both a flat and a sharp A in a peal of seven bells!

The Ballad Singer, for all the world like Wagner's Nuremburg Watchman with lantern and horn, comes on as knocker-up, for it is May morning and by custom 'the May', emblem of summer, must be brought in. (It is quoted on p. 198.) The early budding boughs of birch and larch were stuck into the ground by the young men at the doors of their sweethearts' houses, or garlands were hung above every door in the street, thus converting it by either method into an avenue of fresh greenery. The horn-call was part of the ritual and we hear it in the opera. Hugh is in reflective mood; John is trolling a crude drinking song:

> For drink is my life and be damned to my wife,
> If she'll stop me from filling my belly with beer.

This is not a folk-rhyme nor a folk-tune, but the tune is of folk derivation:

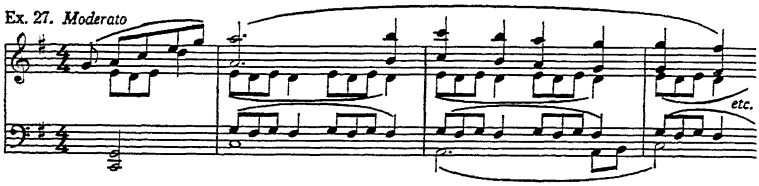
Ex. 26.



The last phrase is what we hear first at that pitch, but though the harmony takes it into C major when the roisterers tumble into the street singing it, we should have to transpose it down into B

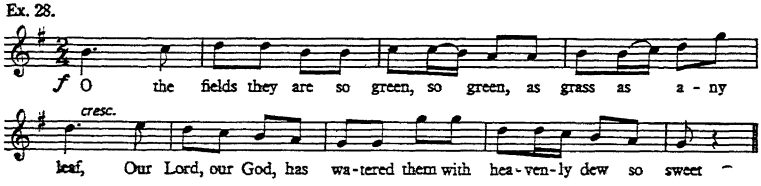
flat to get the notes of the song right as the statement of a quasi-traditional tune.

The revellers stumble against the stocks, where Hugh is found covered by his cloak, and taunt and strike him. But when they have reeled off Mary appears with the Constable's keys and lets Hugh out. The emotions of this turn of affairs are expressed in something quite new of which Ex. 27 shows the soaring melody doubled at the octave on a solo violin, and the figuration, but not the harmony:

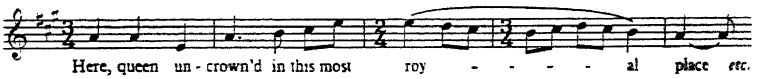
Ex. 27. *Moderato*

The voice parts accord well enough with the key signature, but the accompaniment to all this duet shows in a singularly concise form what Vaughan Williams's harmony is like. The bass moves in consecutive fifths so that the key is shifted, though not changed or modulated, and the bass on which the chords are built rotates round C. Because C is treated as a kind of modal dominant of G it is possible to have the chord of F minor, on which this duet actually begins and ends, as a constituent chord of the key of G. This indeed is a very, very flat seventh, and produces a very curious kind of G major tonality.

When the release is effected Hugh bids Mary fly with him in a broadened form of Ex. 12, the symbol of their union. However, Mary sees that while one might escape two could not, and to prove her words the sounds of the May-horn are heard, indicating the approach of the mayers from the fields and woods of the wolds. John's voice is heard among them singing Ex. 24; the girls in the party however have another May carol on their lips:

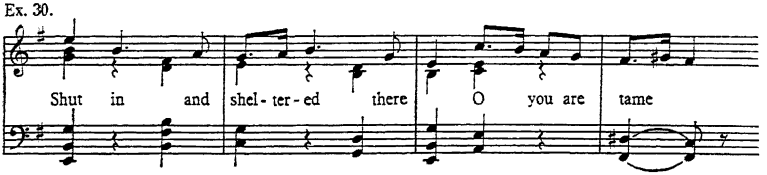
Ex. 28.



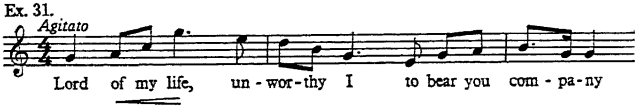
This version, though not with precisely these words, was collected by Lucy Broadwood at King's Langley in Hertfordshire (see *English County Songs*). The mayers miss Mary and another hue and cry begins. Mary's plan is bold and subtler than flight—it is to compromise herself by being found in Hugh's arms under his cloak in hiding behind the stocks. The stratagem succeeds: the Constable (having by now missed his keys) denounces her and tells John he can have her if he like without dowry, an offer which John declines, rather to the disgust of the crowd. When Mary is discovered unashamedly at Hugh's side she has her first big soaring song. Her words originally began 'Here on my throne where honour holds his place', because she was still sitting beside Hugh in the stocks, but since that piece of business was changed the words have been altered to 'Here, queen uncrown'd, in this most royal place'. The melody begins

Ex. 29.

It is too much for the Constable and duly accompanied by Ex. 6 he disowns his daughter; the rival factions surge to and fro till a distant bugle is heard heralding the approach of the troops who are to take the spy to Gloucester. The Sergeant recognizes Hugh as the old friend who once did him a good turn, which he describes in a 'ballad', and shows the spy scare for the ridiculous thing it is. As soon as the soldiers have gone, bearing away John as their conscript, the two versions of the opera differ. In the original there was a complicated ensemble in which everyone from his particular point of view urged upon Hugh and Mary the wisdom of settling in the town. This has disappeared in the definitive version, for however realistic the plot, the opera has now developed sufficient romantic impetus for the action to be simplified. It is true that common sense asserts its propensity for operatic incongruity and at the very end wishes that author and composer had somehow allowed the producer an excuse for giving Mary the chance to dress herself for the rigours of Cotswold weather. But they have quickened the action by cutting out all but the recitative portion

of a harangue from Hugh on the moral virtues of the open-air life. He formerly had an aria beginning

Ex. 30.

But in the final version we have instead a love duet which had originally been sung in the stocks, beginning

Ex. 31.



This is an extended piece of music which makes a worthy climax to the opera and is just as appropriate to the lovers' situation at the end as in the middle. The opera now ends with everyone accepting it that the life of the open road is the only one for the lovers—though in English folk-song it is not the milkmaids but the ladies of high degree who go off with the raggle-taggle gypsies. After a great outburst of Ex. 12 on the orchestra the chorus bids them farewell and the opera ends softly.

Sir John in Love

Sir John in Love has several affinities with *Hugh the Drover* and must have been begun soon after the latter had won its public success in 1924. It was produced, like its predecessor, in the little theatre at the Royal College of Music; four performances conducted by Malcolm Sargent were given in the week 21–6 March 1929. It was revived for the Oxford Musical Festival of 1930 with some of the same cast of R.C.M. students, the rest being

local Oxonians. It has had many amateur performances but so far only one not very satisfactory professional production, at Sadler's Wells in 1946. There is prefixed to the score a Preface of such importance that it must be quoted in full:

To write yet another opera about Falstaff at this time of day may seem the height of impertinence, for one appears to be entering into competition with three great men—Shakespeare, Verdi, and Holst.

With regard to Shakespeare, my only excuse can be that he is fair game, like the Bible, and may be made use of nowadays even for advertisements of soap and razors.

I hope that it may be possible to consider that even Verdi's masterpiece does not exhaust all the possibilities of Shakespeare's genius.

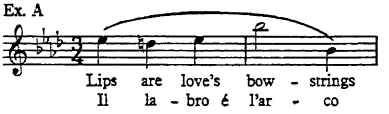
And I hope I have treated Holst with the sincerest flattery not only in imitating his choice of Falstaff as the subject of an opera but in imitating his use of English folk-tunes in the texture of the music. The best I can hope will be that *Sir John in Love* may be considered as a sequel to his brilliant *Boar's Head*. (I have made no mention of Nicolai's *Merry Wives* because, apart from the delightful overture, his music is not known in England.)

My chief object in *Sir John in Love* has been to fit this wonderful comedy with, I trust, not unpleasant music. In the matter of the use of folk-tunes, they only appear occasionally and their *titles* have no dramatic relevancy (except possibly in the case of 'John, come kiss me now'). When a particular folk-tune appeared to me to be the fitting accompaniment to the situation, I have used it. When I could not find a suitable folk-tune, I have made shift to make up something of my own. I therefore offer no apology for the occasional use of a folk-song to enhance a dramatic point. If the result is successful I feel justified; if not, no amount of 'originality' will save the situation. However, the point is a small one, since out of a total of 120 minutes' music the folk-tunes occupy less than 15.

The text is taken almost entirely from the *Merry Wives*, with the addition of lyrics from Elizabethan poets. A few unimportant remarks (e.g., 'Here comes Master Ford') are my own.

Two general considerations, not identical but related, are raised in this preface: one is nationalism—how far is an Englishman likely to be more successful in finding a true musical match for an English comedy than an Italian?—the other is the use of folk-song.

Verdi's *Falstaff* is a masterpiece, mellow with a humanity equal to Shakespeare's own. In a sense masterpieces cannot be compared, yet if two composers write an opera apiece on the same subject comparisons are inevitable. Nor need they be odious. Without resort to the unavailing and somewhat disreputable method of criticism which consists in praising A by a depreciation of B, I will go beyond Dr. Vaughan Williams's own statement that perhaps Verdi's masterpiece does not exhaust all the possibilities of Shakespeare's genius only to the extent of saying that perhaps an English composer, especially a composer steeped in the music and, through the music, the spirit of Shakespeare's own day may give us a more authentic English bourgeoisie, a more romantic Windsor forest, and a greater homogeneity of subject and treatment. With respect I would urge that Nanetta is not quite Sweet Anne Page, who would hardly speak in these accents even to the Fenton whom she preferred above all her other suitors,

Ex. A

nor is Anne quite the girl to take the top line in the splendid ensemble at the end of Verdi's second act. More precocious Italian maidens can carry off this sort of thing better than a young English girl. (Yet I would abate not a word of the praise that has been heaped on Verdi's love-music: 'perhaps', as Mr. Toye says, 'the only operatic music in which the love of boy and girl is adequately interpreted in accordance not only with Latin but with Anglo-Saxon ideals'.)

Then Sir John himself. It is a commonplace of Shakespearian criticism that the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives* is not the Knight of the Histories. He is a lesser man, little more than a figure of fun with only the indomitable humour of the greater Falstaff left to retain for himself our sufficient sympathies. Boito improved Falstaff for Verdi with such devices as the famous monologue on honour borrowed from *Henry IV*. Mr. Toye admits that in the

process he may have become somewhat Latinized, though few are aware of any discrepancy between Verdi and Shakespeare while listening to *Falstaff*. Nevertheless, the tune of 'John come kiss me now', as treated by Vaughan Williams, hits off the exact measure of swagger of Falstaff about to embark on his newest conquests in such a way as Verdi's brief march-tune has hardly time to do. In fact the chief difference between the two operas is probably one of tempo (in the broad sense). Verdi was criticized at the time of *Falstaff's* first production for the sheer speed and brilliance of the work—even Stanford who admired it greatly thought it a little lacking in contrast and repose. The gait of Vaughan Williams's Sir John is a little heavier, and the pace of the intrigue more in keeping with our soft grey climate than with the behaviour of Latin people under the blue Mediterranean sky.

The patch of Italianism in *Falstaff* which strikes the ear most sharply is at the reading of the letter when Mistress Ford and Mistress Page compare notes. But this is a piece of deliberate mock-heroic on Verdi's part, an amusing parody of his own heroic style. It does, however, for the moment take us away from Windsor. Still more does his ending of the opera. Verdi cuts short the midnight revels in the forest with a fugue in which the actors, as Mr. Bonavia says, 'throw down the mask and come to us no longer as comedians but to sing and make merry with us'. 'The whole conception', says Mr. Toye, 'is one of deliberate artificiality related more nearly, despite its setting, to the Commedia del' Arte than to any dramatic product of Romanticism.' True enough, and Shakespeare himself is not above coming forward frankly on occasion in an epilogue or making his actors say direct to the audience 'Our play is done'. He does not do so in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, but ends the play with Ford alias Brook saying to Sir John:

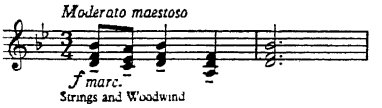
> To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word;
> For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

These lines are set by Vaughan Williams, but they are not the end of the opera. Falstaff responds to the quip with a good-natured acquiescence in the spirit of practical joking and in the vein of

one of Shakespeare's philosophical jesters comes forward and addresses the company and the audience in a song:

> Whether men do laugh or weep
> Whether they do wake or sleep
> Whether they feel heat or cold
> There is underneath the sun
> Nothing in true earnest done.

which is taken up by the whole company though not in a formal fugue, for the illusion of the play is not yet abandoned. And though the curtain comes down on the rich, genial yet slightly ceremonious theme of this song

Ex. 1.

the last thing that happens is a general country dance to Playford's tune 'Half Hanniink'. We take no formal farewell of the players, but see them dancing their way back from the forest to the town as the dawn breaks on Windsor, and the lights go up in the theatre, with an old English tune running in their heads as well as ours.

To make this comparison is not to disparage Verdi nor to claim that Shakespeare's Falstaff is a national figure who cannot go abroad. All it says is (with Vaughan Williams) that Verdi does not exhaust Shakespeare and that, whatever else he may or may not give us, Vaughan Williams's English music is of a piece with Shakespeare's comedy and the English life it depicts. Here is what Masefield says of *The Merry Wives*:[1]

> It is the only Shakespearean play which treats exclusively of English country society. As a picture of that society it is true and telling. Country society alters very little. It is the enduring stem on which the cities graft fashions.

[1] *Shakespeare*, p. 125. Home University Library.

Vaughan Williams, nourished on the songs and dance tunes of English country life, can 'fit this wonderful comedy' with music that is not only 'not unpleasant' but belongs to it because it has grown out of the same 'enduring stem'.

And this is the defence, if any be needed, for the presence of folk-song in an original work. None surely is needed in the face of the successful use of folk-song for dramatic purposes by the Russians and most conspicuously by Smetana in *The Bartered Bride*. Furthermore, Dr. Vaughan Williams has himself a good deal to say about originality and its relation to common property in his book on *National Music* (see in particular chapter v) which need not be repeated here. By a significant coincidence he uses in his definition of folk-song the identical metaphor employed by Masefield in the passage quoted above. Masefield speaks of the 'enduring stem' of English life; Vaughan Williams defines folk-song as an 'individual flowering on a common stem'. An English folk-song is therefore a flower on the common stem of all things English. Folk-song grows in small communities, flourishes among 'country society', and indeed owes its survival in England to the peasantry. The use of folk-song to give point to a play about country folk is obviously appropriate. That Page and Ford and Quickly were not peasants does not spoil the correspondence, for though in 1900 folk-song was only found alive among peasants, in 1600 things were quite otherwise. The same dances were danced on the village green and in the Queen's palace. The same tunes were whistled in the street and played in the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy. Burghers and merchants sang madrigals made for them out of tradesmen's street-calls by composers in the employment of the nobility. Society before the Industrial Revolution was much more homogeneous than it is now, though jazz and wireless, films and television are in recent years doing something towards levelling out class differences of taste. The evidence for the general diffusion of song and dance tunes, which were thus 'popular' in a fuller sense than any music of the million in vogue today, is to be found in letters, in manuscripts, and in publications of the time. Thus, the Earl of Worcester in a letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury dated 19 September 1602 remarks 'We are frolic

here at Court; much dancing in the Privy Chamber of Country Dances before the Queen's Majesty, who is exceedingly pleased therewith', while the tune of *Sellenger's Round*, which may very well have been one of the dances, was, like the *Carman's Whistle*, made by Byrd into a set of variations for virginals. This close contact between the composer and the everyday life of his time, in contrast to the cosmopolitan and courtly traditions of the eighteenth century, has always been Vaughan Williams's own ideal, not because he does not care for eighteenth-century music but because in his own career it became gradually clear to him that English musical life had been too long in tutelage to Germans and Italians and that if it was to revive it must be emancipated. A national music was a necessity to the British composer, and the path of freedom was discovered about sixty years ago in our native folk-song. Having caught its note, as he himself relates, he saw that it led to a closer contact between art and real life and provided the composer with a touchstone of artistic sincerity. The London Symphony, which is not a folk-song symphony, was the outcome of this folk-song method of approaching contemporary life. In *Sir John in Love* the method is reversed in order to serve historical truth. The modern music pours forth and enfolds Shakespeare's comedy, but it leads up to, not away from, folk-song. In Shakespeare's day music and life were at one; popular music reflected popular life; for every situation there is a song; and so the composer can cap his own music with a tune that belongs to the people of the play, to the period of the play, and to the topicality of the play.

The topicality of the play is also enhanced by his inclusion of Elizabethan lyrics and songs from other plays of Shakespeare in his libretto. The spirit must be concentrated, and just as the folk-song caps the situation so the lyric clinches the emotional tension. Farce and music do not march very long or very easily in double harness. Boito when he made his libretto for Verdi left out the broadest and most dramatically improbable episode in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—Mother Prat, the fat woman of Brainford. So does Vaughan Williams, and as if still further to sweeten his opera he lengthens its lyrical moments, thus providing contrast to the

general bustle of the comedy which Stanford found lacking in Verdi. Herein perhaps Vaughan Williams profited by the experience of his predecessor.

Act I

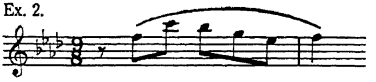
The first act unlike the other three is not formally divided by the fall of the curtain into scenes. Its music is continuous but its eight episodes are each dominated by an appropriate musical characterization. There is a certain broad use of leitmotive so that cross references can occasionally be made with dramatic effect, but it is no Wagnerian system of predetermined identity disks. These salient rhythms, phrases or folkish tunes indeed ought not to be called leitmotives at all: they are merely prominent motifs which seem to epitomize musically the dramatic significance of each episode.

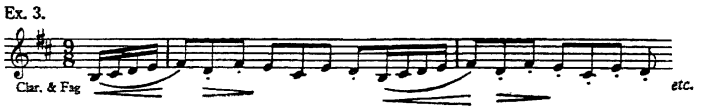
Thus the seventeen bars of Prelude before the curtain rises are a bustling 6/8 rhythm breaking without notice given into 3/4 and back again. This restless 6/8 serves to introduce Shallow (*Tenor* or *Baritone*), the country magistrate, and Evans (*High Baritone*), the Welsh parson, in a state of turmoil about Falstaff's misdeeds, while Slender (*Tenor*) in a corner essays a sonnet to Anne Page, thus presenting the two main themes of the play, ancient villainy and young love. When Falstaff (*Baritone*), entering with Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol, begins to speak, the brisk 6/8 rhythm gives place to a slower and tranquil 3/4 in the folk-song 'A sailor loved a farmer's daughter'. 6/8, however, is resumed for the colloquy of rapscallions, a sextet of abuse 'You Banbury cheese', 'How now, Mephistophilus', and so on. Pistol, challenged by Falstaff with an accusation of having robbed Slender, answers 'alla marcia' in common time, but again the sextet is resumed and completed in 6/8. The 6/8 rhythm is the dominant motif of Episode 1.

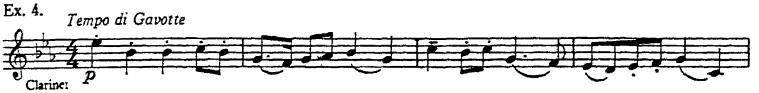
The folk-song quoted by the orchestra while Falstaff and Shallow are wrangling seems in spite of what the composer says in his Preface to have been first suggested by the words 'But not kissed your keeper's daughter', as though the lilt of the words called up a snatch of tune in Falstaff's mind. Otherwise, as he says,

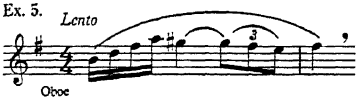
the words have no dramatic relevancy. The tune as quoted in the score is a variant of the last part of the tune in Stanford's *Songs of Old Ireland*. Stanford took it from Petrie's collection and it has an Irish flavour, though parallel English versions—to the words of 'The Young Servant Man' or 'The Cruel Father'—are to be found.

Episode 2 serves to introduce Anne Page (*Soprano*) and contains much lyrical music, beginning with the folk-song 'A Sailor from Sea', including a sad reflection from Anne in the style not of a folk-song but of an ayre to the lute, and finishing with a love duet in which occurs the first hint of the big wedding-song in the last act, of which the clue is

Ex. 2.

Anne enters carrying wine followed by Mrs. Page (*Soprano*) and Mrs. Ford (*Mezzo Soprano*). Slender who has been driven back by the exit of the ruffiians stumbles against Anne. But before he can apologize to Anne or speak to the two wives the orchestra has begun to surround the person of Anne with the lovely tune harmonized as only Vaughan Williams can harmonize a folk-tune, so that the harmony tears the heart out of it yet in adding something to it leaves it more itself than ever: 'The Sailor from Sea' is one of Sharp's tunes from Somerset (see *Folk Songs for Schools*, Novello's Book 268), and there is no relevance in its words to the present situation beyond the happy love, which Anne is not to find yet but will ultimately. This is the leitmotive of Anne's 'pretty virginity' and is heard again a few pages later when Anne reappears to bid Shallow and Evans to come in to dinner. These two gentlemen meantime continue to discuss Falstaff's 'disparagements' against an accompaniment of the kind of folk-dance tune which Vaughan Williams uses throughout this opera for any sort of fussing, coming and going, or intrigue:

Ex. 3.

The gavotte with which Anne tries to get Slender into the house is an extension of the same principle though it is far from bustling and is marked 'quasi lento':

Ex. 4.

Slender takes a good deal of coaxing with his reiterated 'After you', but when he finally disappears Anne stays outside and laments her unhappy love. A plaintive oboe expresses for her the melancholy reflection that a 'world of vile ill-favoured faults' (meaning Dr. Caius) 'looks handsome on three hundred pound a year'.

Ex. 5.

And then she sings

> Weep eyes, break heart,
> My love and I must part;
> Cruel fates true love do soonest sever.
> O I shall see thee never, never.
> O happy is the maid whose life takes end
> Ere it knows parents' frown or loss of friend.

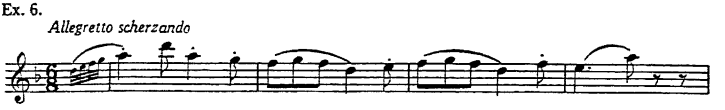
which comes from a play of Thomas Middleton (*c.* 1570–1627), *The Chaste Maid of Cheapside.*

But she has hardly finished when she hears Falstaff's voice off stage. Fenton (*Tenor*) is singing 'Do but look on her eyes', the second stanza of Jonson's 'The Triumph' which is to be her wedding-song in the last act.[1] Anne joins him and they sing a duet, he going on to 'Have you seen but a whyte lily grow' and she to 'Come O come my life's delight, Let me not in languor pine' borrowed from Campion, Ex. 2 providing the shape both

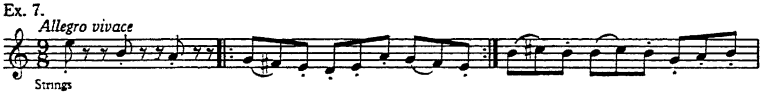
[1] 'Do but look' and 'Have you seen' are sung or said by Wittipol in Jonson's play *The Devil is an Ass* (1610).

of Fenton's son and of the accompaniment. After this lyrical moment the lovers discuss their unhappy predicament to Ex. 5 and finally part as Page (*Baritone*) appears to warn off the young man once more.

After this lyrical episode knockabout begins again: Dr. Caius (*High Baritone*), Mrs. Quickly (*Mezzo Soprano*), and Rugby march in to a quasi-folk-tune:

Ex. 6.

Dr. Caius invokes Mrs. Quickly's aid in his suit of Anne mainly in very lightly accompanied recitative (Ex. 6). Mrs. Quickly to cover up the fact that she is playing the same game of go-between for more than one party starts singing the ballad 'Robin Hood and the Bishop'. Shakespeare merely indicates the refrain 'And down adown a', &c. Vaughan Williams puts into her mouth the last verse of the ballad to a snatch of the tune collected by H. E. D. Hammond in Dorset in 1906 from George Stone, an old post-boy who at the age of eighty-nine was living at Wareham.

A new movement, which begins as a trio but develops into a quartet for Mrs. Quickly, Dr. Caius, Simple, and Rugby, is conducted over another scherzo-like tune of folk-dance derivation:

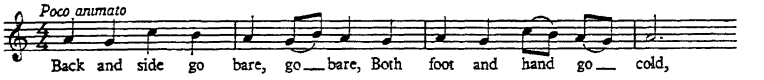
Ex. 7.

This episode is rounded off on a more lyrical note: Dr. Caius forgets his anger and becomes sentimental as he thinks of Anne. He begins to sing to her the old French chanson, 'Vrai dieu d'amours, comfortez moy'. This finished, with comments in descant by Mrs. Quickly and Rugby, the procession moves off to Ex. 6.

The fourth episode is brief and consists solely of Fenton's interview with Mistress Quickly in furtherance of his suit of Anne.

The music sways ruminatively as Mrs. Quickly considers the claims of the three suitors and Ex. 6 is heard faintly rumbling in the bass beneath. At this point occurs the optional Episode subsequently composed and published. See below, p. 296.

The fifth sub-scene is musically 'alla marcia'. Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol enter with the spoils of their thieving expedition and engage with the Host of the Garter in the singing of the ballad from *Gammer Gurton's Needle* 'Jolly Good Ale and Old' by John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells:

Ex. 8.



The rhythm is kept up as the song gives place to dialogue and there is a recapitulation of this refrain. All this, however, is but a prelude to the entry of Falstaff himself who comes on to announce his plot for courting the two Merry Wives.

The dominant theme of the music is the folk-song 'John come kiss me now'. Played low down in the gamut (on cello and bass) its fat complacency enhances the dramatic point. 'I do mean to make love to Ford's wife,' declares Falstaff walking up and down preening himself, while the tune implies that he is confident of an invitation from the lady in question. The tune is found in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book as the subject of a piece by William Byrd. It had a great vogue in Shakespeare's day and subsequently, though it appears to have been more used as a dance than as a song. There is a reference to it in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*—

Jack Shine. I come to dance, not to quarrel. Come what shall it be? Rogero?
Jenkin. Rogero! no; we will dance *The Beginning of the World.*
Cicely. I love no dance so well as *John come kiss me now.*

A Woman Killed with Kindness and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* are practically contemporary—about 1602. But the tune retained its vogue well on into the seventeenth century and is quoted by

Playford in his *Introduction to the Skill of Musick*. There is an allusion to it in the *Westminster Drollery* of 1674:

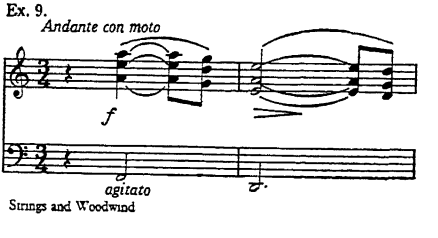
> The fiddler shall attend us
> And first play *John come kisse me.*

and another one is a 1687 translation of *Don Quixote* by J. Phillips. The song was parodied by Jacobite enthusiasts into 'James, come kiss me now' as an apology for having deserted his cause. Chappell, that pioneer in musical antiquarian research, knew all this about it in the middle of the nineteenth century, but the tune did not regain its popularity until the revival of interest in folk-music and Tudor music which began a generation or so ago. The tune is the basis for Falstaff's plot, and after being elaborately worked into a quintet for the five men (Host, Falstaff, and the three rapscallions) it is only broken off by Nym and Pistol suddenly finding conscientious scruples to bearing Falstaff's identical letters to the two ladies. Falstaff assumes an air of overwhelming dignity (reiterated triplets) as he sends the letter by the page Robin, and walks majestically into the inn to the strains of 'John come kiss me' once more.

There is a brief episode of three pages' length in the vocal score dominated by a dry 6/8 rhythm in which Nym and Pistol plot to reveal Falstaff's adulterous project to Ford, its victim.

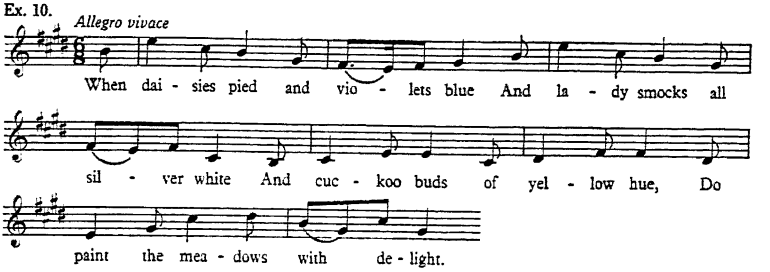
The final episode is ushered in by Ford's 'jealousy' motif:

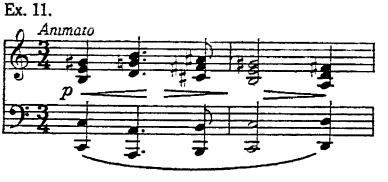
Ex. 9.



Pistol and Nym break the news to Ford (*Bass*) to the development of Ex. 9 but soon change over to their former 6/8 rhythm into which there slips in the bass the tune of 'When daisies pied', the allusion being to the cuckoo, the bird of fear to the cuckold, whose nest has been invaded by the alien bird.

Vaughan Williams's tune to this song, which is interpolated from *Love's Labour's Lost* in order still further to pique the jealous Ford, begins thus:

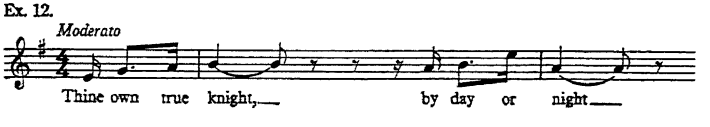
Ex. 10.

Mrs. Page joins Mrs. Ford in it and meeting Ford's angry looks they run off the stage while he is left raging at the word 'cuckold'. It is worth noting that between Ex. 9 and the song Ex. 10 a favourite device of Vaughan Williams's appears, a triad over a 'wrong' bass note which produces a grinding dissonance and is used by him in most of his works for many expressive purposes, here in order to give vent to Ford's choking fury:

Ex. 11.

But the last thing we hear is the jealousy motif Ex. 9 fortissimo.

Act II

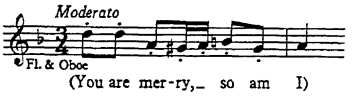
The second act is comparatively short and is divided into two scenes. There is a page or so of prelude in which a rhythmic figure is announced which is to stand throughout for Falstaff's love-making. When Mrs. Page begins to read Falstaff's letter it is to this figure that Falstaff's words are sung:

Ex. 12.

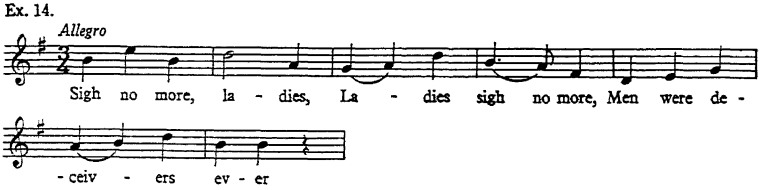


Her own comments on 'the wicked world' that could contain so iniquitous a proposal is couched in triplets which contrast with the square pattern of Ex. 12. This compound duple time is also mentioned in the prelude. Mrs. Ford next enters and the two women compare notes in a duet built out of

Ex. 13.



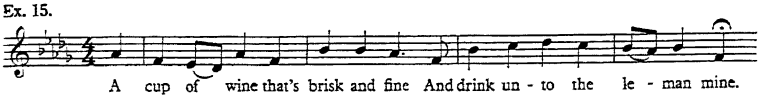
which has also been heard in the brief prelude. They hatch their plot to ensnare Falstaff to music of increasing animation. They quote his 'Thine own true knight' and egg each other on till Mrs. Quickly's voice is heard off stage singing as she approaches a verse of the folk-song 'Lovely Joan'. This is an obscene ballad such as Mrs. Quickly might very well have on her lips, and whose words are appropriate to the present situation. The tune is one collected by Dr. Vaughan Williams himself in Norfolk in 1908 (see *Folk Song Journal*, vol. iv, p. 90). There are other versions in Sharp's *Folk Songs from Somerset*, vol. iv, No. 95, and in *Folk Song Journal*, vol. iv, p. 330. Mrs. Quickly also aptly borrows a song from another play of Shakespeare and sings a new setting of 'Sigh no more, ladies' against a waltz-like accompaniment. It begins as a solo

Ex. 14.

but it soon becomes a trio, which provides a climax and an end to the first scene. An interlude follows,[1] a repetition and expansion, with optional cuts, of the prelude. This entracte gives about four minutes in which the stage can change its scene from a room

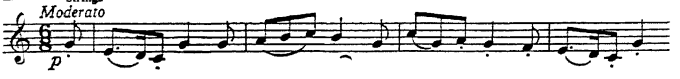
[1] Or the later Interlude, officially so-called with a capital I, from the subsequently published *Prelude, Episode, and Interlude*, may be taken here.

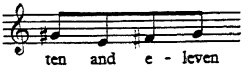
in Page's home to the parlour of the Garter Inn, from which steps lead off to Falstaff's bedroom. Falstaff is discovered sitting at a writing table. He calls for Bardolph to fetch him some sack. He sings to himself a song borrowed from a former jollification—his visit to the Gloucestershire magistrates in *Henry IV, Part II*, v. iii, for which Vaughan Williams has provided a melody (unaccompanied) in the folk-ballad, four-in-a-bar style.

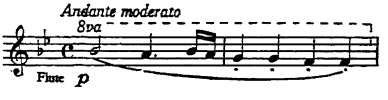
Ex. 15.



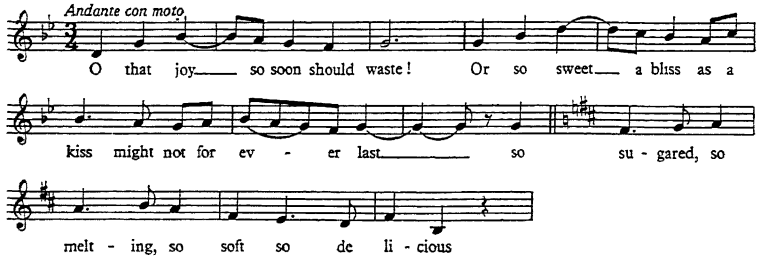
Another 'original' folk-tune follows immediately through and over which Falstaff and Quickly, who has come on her errand from the two Wives, conduct their negotiations:

Ex. 16. Strings

The continuation of this pseudo-folk-tune becomes sufficiently informal to lend itself to extension and to avoid formal closure; it is resumed from time to time as Quickly inveigles Falstaff into accepting a rendezvous with Mrs. Ford between

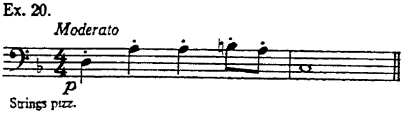
Ex. 17.

Mrs. Quickly then broaches the subject of Mrs. Page in a different measure:

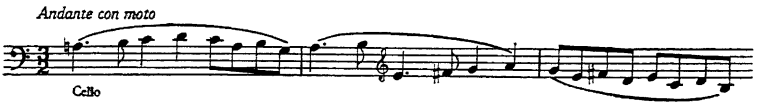
Ex. 18.

Her business finished Mrs. Quickly departs and Falstaff sings 'Go thy ways old Jack', a glorified version of 'John come kiss me now', turned into triple time and expanded to reflect the soaring magnitude of Falstaff's new hopes. Sir John now in love sets himself to compose a ballad to his mistress's lips. The stage directions read:

'He begins to compose a love song. Like all amateur composers he has the best literary traditions coupled with the worst style in music. He sings as he writes in exaggerated "Singer's English" ("thart" for "that", "blees" for "bliss", "raw-hawses" for "roses", etc.)'—a piece of satire that is perhaps anachronistic for the Elizabethan period which seems as though it could do no wrong in music, but it adds to the fun:

Ex. 19.

and a good deal more in the same vein, the words being borrowed from Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, a play performed by the Children of the Chapel in 1600.

He is interrupted by Bardolph, who ushers in Master Brook alias Ford. Falstaff continues to polish his song and Brook to swear he 'will catch the lecher,' in counterpoint which sharpens their cross purposes. However, they soon get to business—

Ex. 20.

a motif which recurs whenever the two men assume formal relations—when Falstaff accepts Ford's money for instance. But Brook alias Ford makes his proposal that Falstaff shall seduce his wife in a more insinuating measure:

Ex. 21.

Falstaff remembers his appointment for 'ten and eleven' (Ex. 17 inverted) and goes off to dress humming more of his song,

> The dew that lies on roses
> When the morn herself discloses
> Is not so precious, &c.

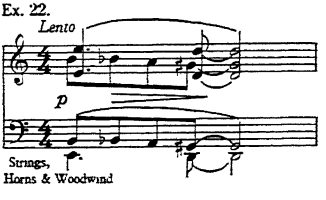
leaving Ford beside himself with rage (Ex. 21 transmuted).

The final episode of the act concerns the duel that Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh Evans come near to fighting over Anne Page. The tune Ex. 6 is made the basis of an animated discussion for five male voices. And while they are getting more and more excited wondering about the issue of the duel Falstaff emerges dressed in his best and marches off to his assignation to Ex. 12.

Act III

The first of the two scenes of Act III deals with the subsidiary characters—Evans, Shallow, Simple, the Host, Dr. Caius, and Rugby—and carries their subplot a stage farther. Musically it forms a bustling prelude to a still more bustling conclusion, for in the second scene the plot reaches its climax and we have the discomfiture both of Falstaff and of Ford and the triumph of the women. So that this act is to be all animation before the nocturne in Windsor Forest which is to provide the anticlimax necessary to all comedies of intrigue. There is one lyrical moment when Mrs. Page sings 'Greensleeves', and this lovely setting of the most famous of all Elizabethan tunes makes a point of repose in the swift action and its lively music.

The act, however, actually opens slowly and tearfully with a heavy orchestral sigh:

Ex. 22.

Poor Sir Hugh Evans is in a great state of perturbation. Sword in hand, awaiting his opponent, he seeks to draw some consolation

to calm his nerves from a book of poems. He finds two passages but in his agitation mixes them up—Psalm 137 and Marlowe's 'Passionate Shepherd'. In the play Evans, who has difficulties with his labial consonants, sings the latter first, beginning in the middle of the second stanza of 'Come live with me and be my love',

To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals
There will we make our peds of roses
And a thousand vagrant posies

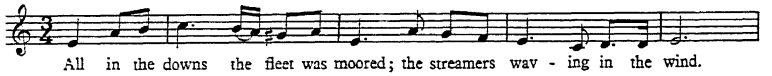
which is not quite accurate but near enough to what Marlowe wrote about the beds of roses. Emotion overcoming him, he starts again and interpolates a line of the Psalm:

Melodious birds sing madrigals
When as I sat in Papylon
And a thousand vagram posies
To shallow rivers—

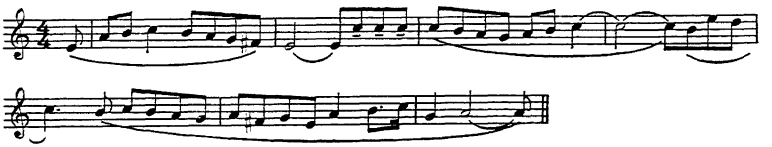
In the opera we hear the traditional tune of 'To Shallow Rivers' before Evans opens his mouth, but the first words he utters are a metrical version of the 137th Psalm which he chants to the psalm-tune 'St. Mary'.

'To Shallow Rivers' is an ancestral version of 'Black-eyed Susan'. Chappell explains that in composing this song for the ballad operas of the mid-eighteenth century Leveridge 'seems to have drawn more on memory than imagination', and adds that 'one of the snatches sung by Ophelia in *Hamlet* and several other old songs begin in the same manner'. 'Black-eyed Susan' begins

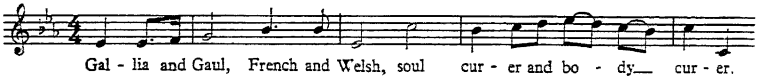
Ex. 23.



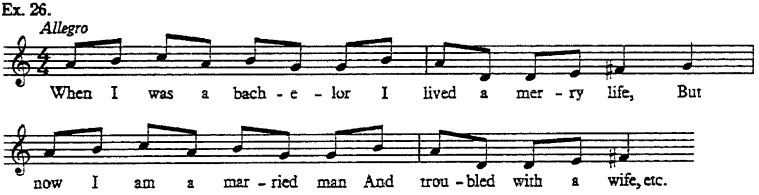
Dr. Vaughan Williams's version is in common time and after an almost identical beginning the tunes begin to diverge:

Ex. 24.

'St. Mary' is a tune for the metrical versions of the Psalms which were made in the early days of Protestant worship. Its first known appearance is in Prys's *Welsh Psalter* of 1621. It is to be found in *The English Hymnal* (No. 84) and is the subject of a fine Chorale Prelude for organ by Charles Wood. Evans does not manage to finish his Psalm in one attempt, but breaks off to speak to Simple. And he talks to himself before he begins on 'To Shallow Rivers', at which also he has two attempts. But Simple has returned bringing with him Shallow, Page, Ford, Slender, and Host, though not Caius for the moment. 'Ford takes no part in the proceedings but stands gloomily apart' (stage direction). The orchestra begins to fuss in 12/8 time as each man makes a characteristic utterance. When Caius and Rugby enter it resumes the imitation folk-tune (in the same rhythm) associated with Caius in Act I, Ex. 6. To this tune Caius springs at Evans, but the two are kept apart by the Host and the others. Host then sings a ballad of pacification 'alla marcia':

Ex. 25.



which leads to an outburst of enthusiasm from all the men present except Ford, and they prepare to go in and seal the reconciliation in a drink when a clock strikes ten. This rouses Ford. He invites the company to dinner with a promise that they shall have some sport and he will show them a monster. The company is agog with curiosity and off they go singing 'Peg a Ramsey'—

Ex. 26.

which touches Ford too closely for him to be able to join in singing it. This is the tune which Hawkins (in his *History of Music*)

says belongs to the song 'Peg a' Ramsey', mentioned by Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*, and it is found in William Ballet's Lute Book (1594) preserved at Dublin. At a later date in *Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1707), the tune is found united with its original words:

> Bonny Peg o' Ramsey is that any man may see
> And bonny is her face with a fair freckled eye
> Neat is her body made and she hath good skill
> And round are her bonny arms that work well at the mill.

But in Shakespeare's time the ballad with the refrain of the watchful wife was common, since Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) quotes the line immediately following those given above 'Give me my yellow hose again'. Slender sings 'O sweet Anne Page' as a counterpoint to 'Peg a' Ramsey', and at its last lines 'For my wife she watches me, see yonder where she goes' the stage is blacked out and the orchestra begins an entracte.

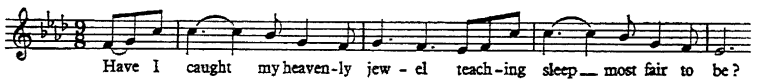
The motif of Ford's jealousy, Ex. 9, is heard at once. Then follows optionally, if the scene-shifters need time, a tissue composed of allusions to music already heard including Falstaff's song 'O that joy so soon should waste' from Act II, the fussing 12/8 music of Shallow, Slender, Host, and company, and a return to Ex. 9.

Just before the lights go up the orchestra begins a moto perpetuo founded on the country dance tune 'Speed the Plough'. When the curtain rises we are in Ford's house and we find Mrs. Ford giving orders to bring in the washing basket. When all is made ready for Falstaff's downfall Mrs. Ford lies down on the couch and takes up her lute. She begins to sing 'Greensleeves', which in this setting is the gem of the whole opera. 'Greensleeves' seems to have been the most hard-worked tune in England during the century from 1575 on. It is constantly found in the song books of the early seventeenth century. Verses are printed, and at the head or foot the indication that they are to be sung to the tune 'Greensleeves'—all manner of verse including Christmas carols. It was popular also as a dance measure but did not appear in Playford's *The Dancing*

Master till the edition of 1686. The tune is found in William Ballet's Lute Book, but the first reference to the ballad is in the Stationers' Company's Register in 1580. That it already enjoyed considerable vogue, however, is shown by the fact that there is also a licence of about the same time to another printer for 'A Ballad, being the Ladie Greene Sleeves Answere to Donkyn his frende'. The present words are taken as they stand from the miscellany *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* of 1584. Shakespeare mentions the tune twice in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In Act II, Scene i, Mrs. Ford says of Falstaff's knavish disposition and his fair words that 'they do no more adhere and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of "Greensleeves" '. Which looks as though it was then rather sung at a slow tempo and with the melancholy passion of the present setting than at the brisk pace demanded by dancers, whether of 1680 or of 1950. But 'adhere' and 'keep place' may mean no more than the fitting of notes and accents, and may not refer to the suitability of setting a doxology to a lover's plaint. This allusion is not found in the libretto of the opera. The other one is, however: in Act V, Scene v, Falstaff arrives in Windsor Forest disguised as Herne the Hunter, and on meeting Mrs. Ford there says, 'Let the sky rain potatoes, let it thunder to the tune of "Greensleeves" . . . let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here'.

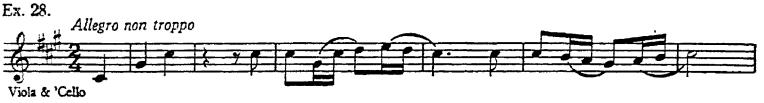
As Mrs. Ford finishes her song Falstaff's voice is heard off echoing hers. He enters, sees Mrs. Ford, who is pretending to have fallen off to sleep, and sings at once, 'Have I caught my heavenly jewel?' This is the first line of a song of Sir Philip Sidney quoted by Shakespeare, but Vaughan Williams has set the whole verse and made a song of it to balance 'Greensleeves'.

Ex. 27.



They have hardly had time to join their voices in a duet when the time changes to a brisk 2/4 and Mrs. Quickly comes rushing in, interrupting Falstaff's love passages and announcing the

hurried arrival of Mrs. Page. Breathlessly she declares that Ford is at the door:

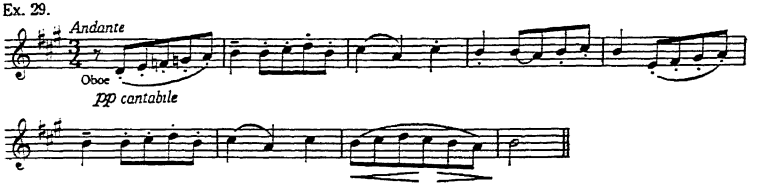
Ex. 28.

Falstaff goes behind the arras. Refuge in the basket is suggested for him and they pack him in to Ex. 27, not, however, before Mrs. Page has confronted him with her letter. Immediately the strains of 'Peg a Ramsey' (Ex. 26) are heard off as Ford's small army approaches. Mrs. Page now retires behind the arras. In Shakespeare the arras is only used for Falstaff's temporary hiding-place before he gets into the basket. In Verdi's *Falstaff* Boito turned it to splendid account in hiding Fenton and Nanetta behind it and revealing them during Ford's frantic search. Vaughan Williams has borrowed the idea, but put Mrs. Page behind the screen to appear demurely at a dramatic moment, and so unexpectedly as to make the Host and Dr. Caius think she is the 'monster' Ford promised to show them.

Ford searches the house to the tune of 'The Old Wife of Dallowgill', while the women and the orchestra have another tune which they maintain in various forms persistently against the dance tune. This is a tune well known in the north Yorkshire dales, where it is used for sword dancing. Miss Gilchrist recovered part of it from a former leader of a troup of sword dancers at Shap, and Cecil Sharp used it for the Ampleforth Sword Dance. The 'Captain' of the Kirkly Malzeard Sword Dancers refers to it in the last verse of his song introducing the dancers:

> You've seen them all go round,
> Think on them what you will,
> Music, strike up and play
> 'T'auld wife o' Dallowgill'.

The plot at this point does not follow Shakespeare, who brings back Ford looking foolish at having found no one in his house and begging everyone's pardon because he cannot for the moment justify his suspicions. Boito, as just mentioned, discomfits Ford by disclosing not Falstaff but the embarrassed young lovers behind

the screen. Vaughan Williams reveals Mrs. Page, who comes forward with a mocking curtsey. The company then begin to talk all at once over this mock-formal tune (quasi-minuet):

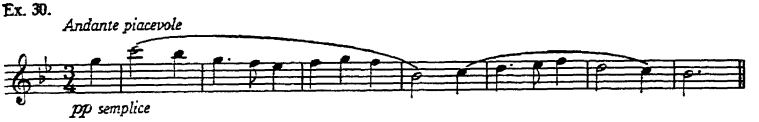
Ex. 29.

The men sing

> Here lies the proof by that which they do
> Wives may be merry and yet honest too.

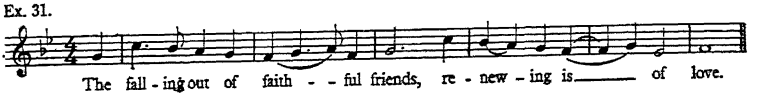
This moves Ford to beg his wife's pardon and they all join in singing 'Peg a Ramsey' (Ex. 26).

Act IV

Two scenes of unequal length and importance make up the fourth act. The first scene occupies only half the stage and shows a room in Ford's house where Ford and his wife are conversing in the full ardour of reconciliation. There has been a short prelude of gracious, warm-hearted music, in which occurs this melody:

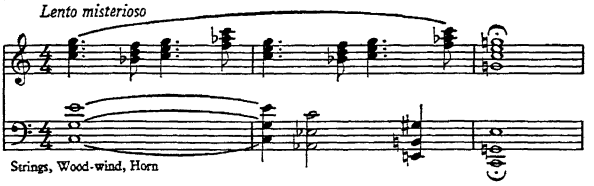
Ex. 30.

Why does it sound familiar? Partly because it is a blood relation of the other love-songs addressed to Mrs. Ford though they, to be sure, were lecherous rather than loving in intent. Partly because it hints at a quotation from Richard Edwards's madrigal 'In going to my naked bed':

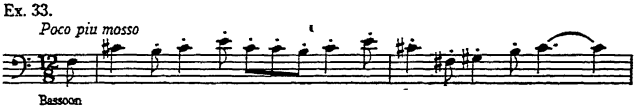
Ex. 31.

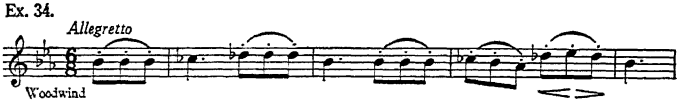


Sure enough when Mrs. Ford grants her husband the pardon which he begs it is in those words from the madrigal—'The falling

out of faithful friends, renewing is of love'. And the whole passage is redolent of renewed love. But before it is over we hear of a new plot: the Pages arrive with their little son. Sir Hugh Evans is prepared 'to teach the children their behaviours', and Mrs. Page, taking the centre of the stage, unfolds her plan. The old legend of Herne the Hunter is its starting-point and this Tarnhelm-ish progression of chords is its motif:

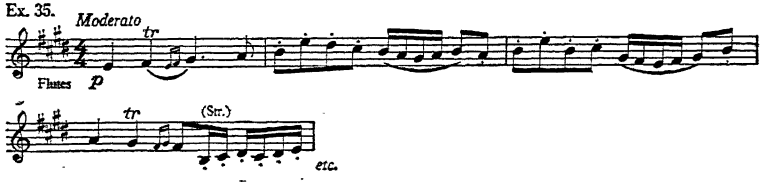
Ex. 32.

The ghostly goings-on when the Hunter walks the forest, however, are depicted in a bustling 12/8 quasi-folk-dance tune:

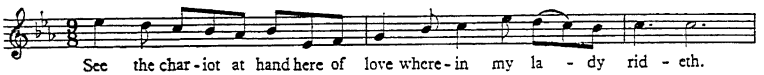
Ex. 33.

Evans, having already conducted a rehearsal of his imitation fairies, comes on, and the music changes to another dance tune, which forms the basis of a choral ensemble:

Ex. 34.

Amid all this excitement and bustle the Page parents are forging another and more serious plot—to get Anne abducted and married that night. But as they favour different suitors and the one thinks she will be wearing green while the other declares for white, it is not surprising that eventually the plot miscarries and Anne gets her own choice. All is now ready and the party makes off to the forest and to the rendezvous at Herne the Hunter's oak. An entracte covers the change of scene which brings the full stage into

use. The change can be a quick one, and the music provided for it consists of a page or so of dance music founded on Ex. 34, horn-calls to suggest the forest and an orchestral version of 'Greensleeves'.

Scene ii lights up gradually and shows Herne's oak in the moonlight. The conspirators enter in pairs and small parties of would-be fairies also appear. All this plotting has a disturbing effect on the rhythm and phrasing. A clock strikes twelve. They all run off the stage. Enter Falstaff wearing horns, rather depressed but not to be baulked of his aims. Over heavy pizzicato chords his 'Own true knight' theme is heard (Ex. 12). He makes his great invocation to Jove, who became a bull for love of Europa and a swan for Leda, to help one that has become a Windsor stag for Mrs. Ford. Her voice, apt to the moment, is heard off stage calling him in something very like her 'heavenly jewel' tune (Ex. 27). He has just begun to make love to Mrs. Ford when she remarks that Mrs. Page is there too. Ex. 12 again, agitato this time, as Falstaff says he is equal to them both. At this point the fairies start chromatic wailings off and soon come on from every direction. Last of all comes Anne Page, dressed as the Queen of the Fairies, who, to the sound of the 'Tarnhelm' theme (Ex. 32), charges them what they shall do. During the dance that follows Caius and Slender each get the fairy whom they have been given to understand is Anne Page in disguise, while Anne is carried off by Fenton to Ex. 5 (in a broader version). Meantime Evans takes charge of the dance and stops it abruptly exactly opposite Falstaff with the remark that he 'smells a man of middle earth'. The fairies tease Falstaff, pinching him and singeing him with their tapers. The dance starts up again with another 12/8 measure akin to Ex. 33. At a horn-call the fairies rush off the stage and leave Falstaff. But only for a moment. A stately processional starts

Ex. 35.

and the principal characters enter, beginning with Mr. and Mrs. Page; they address suitable remarks to Falstaff, until he says, 'I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass'. Ford then cheerfully says, 'Ah you're not the only one who has the laugh against you. Tell my wife that by now her daughter is married to Master Slender.' But Slender is there to tell how he was deceived into taking a 'lubberly boy' to church. Mrs. Page then says, 'Well, well, never mind, Anne is by this time married to Dr. Caius.' At this moment enter Caius dragging the page Robin whom he has just 'married'. Caius storms to the duel music from the beginning of Act III, plus a counterpoint. Then there is a snatch of Ex. 6 as Caius and Rugby (with whom it is associated) depart. Ford says, 'This is strange; who hath the right Anne?' And forthwith a soft arpeggio chord of E flat strikes the ear and a chorus is heard off singing

Ex. 36.

and the great song prepared for us by Fenton in the first act is launched upon the night air of the forest. From E flat the rapturous tune plunges into the more passionate key of F minor for the second verse, to which Fenton adds a descant which ends up triumphantly in C major. Musically this epithalamium might serve as the climax and conclusion of the opera, but the plot is not yet completely unravelled. Page wants to know what the mischief is the meaning of it all. Falstaff steps forward and utters a few words of appeasement to parental wrath. This touch of magnanimity, to 'John come kiss me', makes Sir John once more lovable and reconciled to all. In blessing the whole party he again takes the centre of the stage to finish his comedy. But an opera may not descend to its close as a comedy can and ought. It must broaden to some great tune or conclude with some formal ensemble. *Sir John in Love*, like some of the composer's symphonies, ends with an epilogue. We hear its massive opening as the Merry Wives and their husbands finish their last couplet (Ex. 1). Falstaff advances with the young lovers (Anne and Fenton) on his right

and the old rascals (Pistol and Quickly) on his left, and leads the whole company in a sententious finale. The words are taken from Philip Rosseter's *A Book of Airs* (1601) and are sometimes attributed to Campion, who collaborated with Rosseter.

Whether men do laugh or weep,
Whether they do wake or sleep,
Whether they die young or old,
Whether they feel heat or cold,
There is underneath the sun
Nothing in true earnest done.

But with such words formality breaks down and before they have ceased singing they have danced a few steps and regrouped themselves. A bagpiper appears on the scene and begins to play 'Half Hannikin', which is the sign for a general dance, whose figures, taken from English folk-dances, are prescribed by the composer. At the end of it they all take breath and lift up their voices in harmony, echoing the words 'And the world is but a play' and the music of Ex. 1.

The tune 'Half Hannikin' is found in the first edition of Playford's *The Dancing Master* (1650), but the dance was done as early as the reign of Henry VIII. Miss Gilchrist (*Journal of the English Folk Dance Society*, 1931) traces its history from a grotesque dance of early Tudor times. Chappell (*Popular Music of the Olden Time*) quotes an account by Sir H. Herbert of a performance at Whitehall in 1622 of Jonson's masque *Time Vindicated*, after which 'the Prince did lead the measures with the French Ambassador's wife and the measures, branles, corrantos, and galliards being ended, the masquers with the ladies did daunce two country dances, namely, *The Soldier's Marche* and *Huff Hamukin*'. Vaughan Williams, however, emphasizes its popular origin by harmonizing the tune with consecutive triads to suggest the bagpipe's wheezy sound.

Postscript to Sir John in Love

Six years after the publication of *Sir John in Love* there appeared a supplement to the opera, consisting of a Prologue, an Episode, and an Interlude. These are three optional numbers which may be added to the performance at the discretion of the producer.

The conductor is not likely to take a strong line about any of them except the Interlude, which contains new and significant music. It deals with Fenton's wooing of Anne Page and serves to increase the lyrical element in the opera (cf. p. 274).

The Prologue was written for a performance of the opera by the Bristol Opera School in the autumn of 1933 conducted by Mr. Robert Percival. It is based on the tradition that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was hastily composed to order by Shakespeare for a performance before Queen Elizabeth. Plays were the standard method of entertaining royalty in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the tradition goes that the Queen wanted to hear more about the Fat Knight, and herself suggested that Sir John might be seen 'in love'. Students of Shakespeare explain the discrepancy between the Knight of the Histories and the Knight of this comedy in the light of this legend. The Prologue, therefore, shows the Queen's Chamberlain, Lord Hunsdon, interviewing the Master of the Revels about the arrangements for the Queen's entertainment. It opens with a fanfare of two trumpets, two horns, and tenor trombone. Servants are preparing the stage, a procession of girls enters strewing flowers, followed by the Queen herself and the courtiers, the fanfare meantime having changed to a march tune. The words sung are a pastiche with the refrain:

O beauteous Queen of second Troy
Accept of our unfeigned joy.

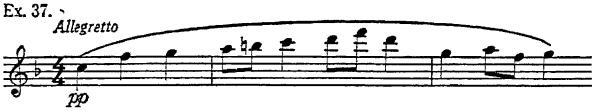
(The first line is familiar for its occurrence in Byrd's madrigal, 'This sweet and merry month'.) The players are brought on, Hemynge in the part and costume of Falstaff, to a quasi-folk-dance tune in the style of 'Sir Roger de Coverley'. The Queen expresses her acceptance of the play and her wish to see Falstaff in love. The Lord Chamberlain dismisses the company with the words, 'Now go, make you ready your play "Sir John in Love".' Hence the title, echoed to the roof by the players and chorus.

Episode

The Episode occurs in Act I between the exit of Mrs. Quickly, who has been talking to Dr. Caius about Anne Page, and the

drinking chorus 'Back and side go bare' sung by Bardolph, Nym, Pistol, and the Host. It is the thieving expedition mentioned in the stage directions (p. 58 of vocal score; cf. p. 279 above), and its purpose is to show these rapscallions in operation instead of merely discussing their thefts. Some ladies and gentlemen of the court enter and begin to sing a new version of 'Say dainty dames shall we go play?' familiar to us from Weelkes's madrigal. Pistol enters and picks a pocket, Nym does the same, Bardolph tries and fails and only just escapes being seen. Nym criticizes his technique: 'His thefts are too open; he kept not time', Falstaff's words in Shakespeare, not Nym's. The dialogue which is put together from the third scene of the first act of *The Merry Wives* is conducted over the madrigal sung by the chorus, while the orchestra continues its very active bass 'alla marcia' which runs naturally into the preliminary music of the carousal ballad, Ex. 8 (see above, p. 279).

The opening music of the Episode, however, has been a flowing texture of free counterpoint based on a tune in the Lydian mode:

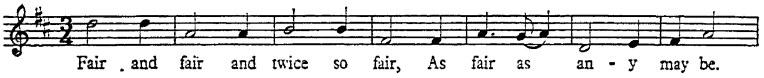
Ex. 37.

The 'madrigal' hovers tonally between this and D major with an excursion into E, but on its return to the flats it subsides into F. The final tonic chord of F contains D instead of C, but it remains a tonic chord and not a chord of the sixth all the same. After the join with the main stream the tonality becomes D Dorian, so that the two episodes, though related tonally, are differentiated. Thus these few pages form an illuminating example of Vaughan Williams's use of neo-modal keys.

Interlude

This Interlude, in which Fenton's love for Anne Page is developed and the deception of Slender and Dr. Caius made more prominent, may be played, according to the composer's directions, either between the first and second acts or between the first and

second scenes of Act II. It begins with a short prelude of the main love music, Ex. 2, a foretaste of Ex. 36. Fenton appears and tells Host of his love for Anne. When the Host replies encouragingly, a pipe tune is heard in the distance, which increases in volume till a chorus of young men and girls, including Anne, comes on singing to the accompaniment of a piper and drummer. Host approaches and asks them what they think of Master Fenton, and promptly answers the question himself over rather breathless repetitions of an eager one-bar phrase. The upshot of it is that Anne says, 'Let him woo for himself', which Fenton thereupon proceeds to do in a lovely song. The words 'Beauty clear and fair' are by John Fletcher. The chorus echoes the lover's word and Anne gives her answer. A choral waltz sets the seal upon their love and a crown of flowers upon their heads:

Ex. 38.



This is developed at length into an ensemble for chorus, lovers, and Host. The words are a dialogue of Oenone and Paris in *The Arraignment of Paris*, a play written for the Children of the Chapel in 1583 by George Peele (1558–97). The scene may end here or it may be pursued farther by Anne revealing to Host her difficulty with the two other suitors being pressed upon her by her father and mother. The conspiracy which takes place in the fourth act may thus be prepared at this point. When all is arranged Host turns to go, as he has to wait upon Falstaff, but he turns round and sings to Fenton in joke, 'I mun be married a-Sunday', borrowed from *Ralph Roister Doister*. This is echoed off stage by the chorus and the episode is closing when Caius rushes on calling for Anne Page. Slender also enters and their mutual embarrassment is resolved in an extra courtly bow to each other. They walk off together just as the piper and drummer are heard returning from escorting the lovers back to Windsor. The orchestral interlude in the score may now be resumed at a point a few bars after it was broken off.

Job

Job, one of the greatest creations of its composer, is wholly characteristic, profoundly English, and unflinchingly modern. Each of these epithets might be justified and expanded from the score alone. But great as it is, this music is only a part of a greater whole —the ballet, or, as the composer preferred with doubtful historical warrant to call it, a masque for dancing. *Job* is music for the stage, and it is only when it is played as an accompaniment to stage action that the full greatness of the music is revealed. It is perhaps paradoxical that subservience should exalt it, but it is true; and it is also true that without the right music, as this music is right for it, the magnificent drama of the stage could not take wing. The synthesis of dramatic idea, plastic design, stage décor, music, and dancing is achieved in *Job* to a rare degree; in this *Gesamtkunstwerk* the unification is complete. To see and hear—why have we no comprehensive word for actively assisting at the presentation of a work of art?—*Job* is a wholly absorbing experience. And the reason is not far to seek—its origin is a fundamental human experience which in its serial passage through the minds of the poet author of the Book of Job, of the visionary draughtsman who made the *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, and of the mystical [1] composer who has entered into equal partnership with them, has been distilled into one of those sublime works of art in which matter and form have been fused, and from which all dross has been purged.

But it had a physical as well as a spiritual origin. By 1927 Dr. Geoffrey Keynes, a scholar steeped in the mind of William Blake, had become convinced, through long familiarity with Blake's designs, that behind their 'elaborate grandeur' the inner thread of the drama 'possessed a fundamental simplicity, and if this could be successfully extracted it would provide the theme for a ballet of a kind new to the English stage. Blake had, moreover, unconsciously

[1] This is a dangerous word; I mean by it here a mind which has consistently chosen the mystical poets and apocalyptic texts for setting and elsewhere written music strong in penetrating vision.

provided in his designs settings which could easily be adapted for stage scenes, and innumerable suggestions in his figures for attitudes and groupings which cried out for their conversion by a choreographer into actuality and movement.'[1]

Dr. Keynes, therefore, contrived a scenario, and with the help of an artist, Mrs. Gwendolen Raverat, who made the stage settings, reduced Blake's twenty-one engravings to eight scenes and so constructed the framework of a ballet of suitable length. It remained to find the music and the choreography. Diaghilev was approached for the latter, but he turned down the project, Dr. Keynes relates, as 'too English' and 'too old-fashioned'. He was right about its Englishness, and it was perhaps just as well that it was left to someone with a better understanding of things English to devise a suitable choreography. Ninette de Valois soaked herself in Blake's designs and so to speak dissolved out of their attitudes, groupings, and gestures a flowing stream of physical movement.

Before this Dr. Vaughan Williams had been approached with an invitation to write the music. He found the subject congenial, and when on Diaghilev's refusal there seemed no immediate prospect of the complete work getting on to the stage, he was unable to relinquish the task, and completed his score for a full concert orchestra. In this form *Job* was finished early in 1930 and was performed for the first time at the Norwich festival on 23 October of that year. When the possibilities of dramatic performance came once more into view with the foundation of the Camargo Society for the furtherance of the art of ballet in England, a reduced score was made by Constant Lambert. The complete work was performed for the first time at the Cambridge Theatre on 5 and 6 July 1931. A few weeks later, on 24 July, it was performed by the same company at the ninth annual festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music held at Oxford.

In writing the music, Dr. Vaughan Williams naturally went for first-hand inspiration to Blake's engravings, and the score bears frequent reference to individual pictures in the series. It is easy to

[1] Introduction to Pierpont Morgan Library reproduction of Blake's *Illustrations to the Book of Job*.

understand that music so derived might not in every particular follow the detailed scenario which Dr. Keynes and Mrs. Raverat had derived from their study of the engravings. The synopsis of the plot and the detailed stage directions of the score are not therefore identical with the synopsis which is always printed in the programme when the ballet is staged. In discussing the music scene by scene I shall, therefore, print both synopses side by side in order that it may be clear exactly how the composer's mind envisaged the subject presented to him by others.

His change of title from ballet to masque is also significant of his attitude. 'Masque for dancing' is a very fair description, but within the strict meaning of the terms it involves a measure of confusion and even self-contradiction. Dancing is in any case one of the senior partners in the company of the elements which coalesce to form the masque, pageantry is its equal, music and poetry its juniors. But senior or junior, the essence of the masque is that it is a combination of *all* the arts of the theatre, and without songs and dialogues a masque is not a masque but a pantomime. The modern descendant of the masque is the revue. In *Job* there is no spoken word though there is drama, and there are no songs though there is music. In so far as dancing is the chief element of the masque it is redundant to speak of a masque for dancing. In so far as dancing is made to provide the whole instead of only a part of the dramatic structure the masque is not a masque but a ballet. But 'ballet' has two implications in modern times which probably account for Dr. Vaughan Williams shying away from it. It is a sophisticated, if not a frivolous, entertainment and its interest is altogether too female. The modern balletomane cares for little beyond the prowess of his favourite ballerina. On the other hand, 'masque' has two implications that make it applicable to Dr. Vaughan Williams's *Job*—aristocratic dignity and the musical forms of the seventeenth century. The basic designs of the music of *Job* are the dance-forms of the period when the masque flourished in England—the saraband, the minuet, the pavane, the galliard—and in one place the composer suggests that the figures of the dance may take a hint from two English country dances which were then approaching the height of their vogue. The subjects of the masques were usually

taken from classical mythology, allegory, or the more remote branches of history, and their treatment was more opulent and discursive than is desirable in *Job*. The summary of the matter is therefore that 'masque for dancing' is apt but inaccurate, and that it is customary and convenient to call *Job* a ballet, because it is one, so long as one remembers it is like no other ballet.

The next point to be elucidated throws light on the music indirectly through its bearing on the dramatic plan of the work. Those who see the ballet for the first time must notice and be puzzled by the physical resemblance of Job to the Godhead. On reference to their programme they read that the figure who is clearly represented dramatically as God is called Job's Spiritual Self, and they leap to the conclusion that this is another of those hypocritical periphrases required by the Censor of Stage Plays, who will not allow representations of Divine Persons on the English stage. But they will be wrong. The idea is Blake's, and it is Blake who, in his engravings, envisages God as Job's spiritual self and intentionally makes the two figures resemble each other. Furthermore, Satan is also Job himself in his more earthy and material aspects, and though Satan is not depicted in the lineaments of Job, he is allowed to usurp the Throne. In a simple Biblical drama of Good and Evil Satan might take to himself all the powers of this world, but could hardly mount the throne of the God of the Universe. The story of Blake's designs is not that of simple illustrations to a book of the Bible but to a drama of his own conception that grew out of a lifelong preoccupation with the Book of Job. Blake's drama is not therefore a debate on the problem of suffering but a 'primarily subjective experience; the account of a man's inward struggle and triumph; the conflict between his indwelling Good and Evil powers'.[1] 'Blake', Mr. Wicksteed further remarks, 'set out to answer the problem of evil which was posed but was ultimately evaded by the author of the Book of Job.' The twenty-one engravings which he made in 1820, thirty-five years after his interest was first engaged in the subject of Job, are therefore Blake's answer to this ultimate problem.

[1] Dr. Keynes quoting Mr. Joseph Wicksteed, who first convincingly expounded the symbolism in Blake's art.

Scene I

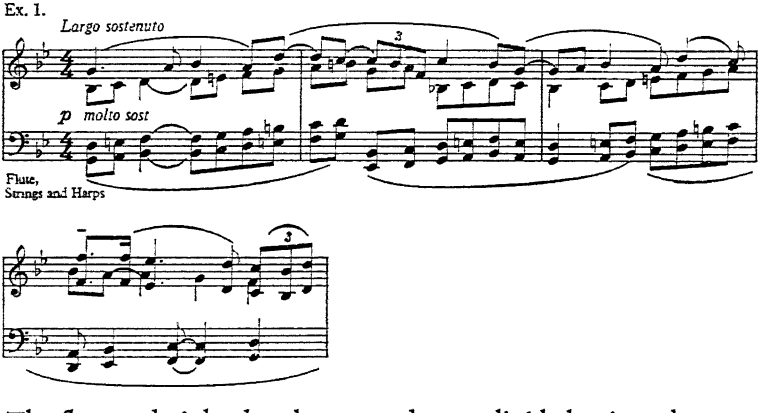
(Dr. Keynes's scenario is printed on the left-hand side of the page, Dr. Vaughan Williams's on the right.)

Job is sitting in the sunset of prosperity with his wife, surrounded by his seven sons and three daughters. They all join in a pastoral dance. When they have dispersed, leaving Job and his wife alone, Satan enters unperceived. He appeals to Heaven, which opens, revealing the Godhead (Job's Spiritual Self) enthroned within. On the steps are the Heavenly Hosts. Job's Spiritual Self consents that his moral nature be tested in the furnace of temptation.

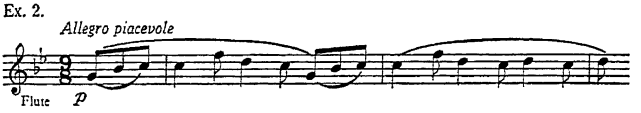
'Hast thou considered my servant Job?' *Introduction, Pastoral Dance, Satan's Appeal to God, Saraband of the Sons of God.* Job and his family sitting in quiet contentment surrounded by flocks and herds. Satan enters unperceived and appeals to heaven. God answers: 'All that he hath is in thy power.'

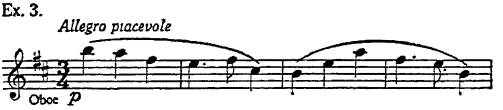
It is to be observed that as in *Flos Campi* each section of the music has a superscription of a quotation from scripture.

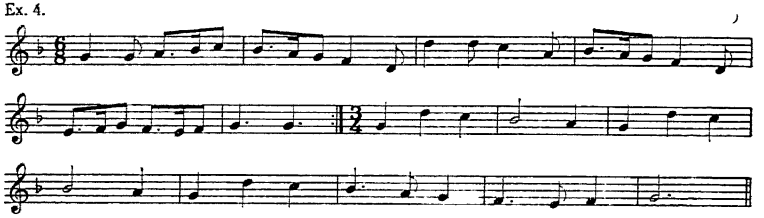
The scene is set as follows:

Ex. 1.

The flute and viola play the pastoral tune, divided strings the consecutive triads which are so conspicuous a mannerism of Vaughan Williams's personal idiom; the harp doubles it all and suffuses it with pale gold. The alternation of triplets with even quavers is a

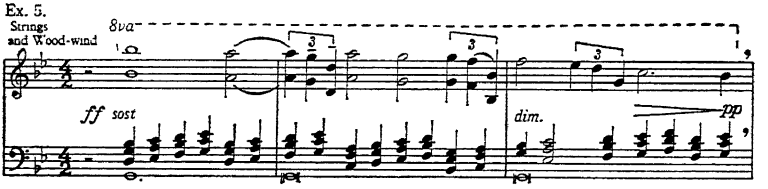
fundamental feature of Job's personal themes, which here include his children. His seven sons and three daughters now dance, and the choreographer is instructed to take a hint from the folk-dances 'Jenny pluck pears' which is in Playford's *The Dancing Master*, and 'Hunsdon House'. The women's dance begins:

Ex. 2.

The men respond and encircle the women to

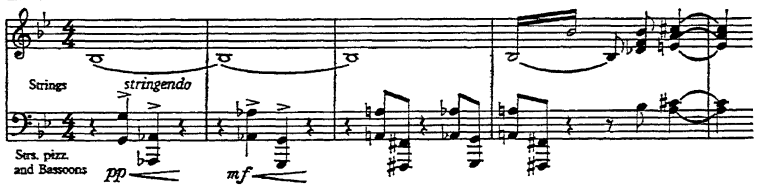
Ex. 3.

and by and by the two themes are put together as the dance becomes general. It may be of interest to quote the tune of 'Jenny pluck pears' to show the similarity of rhythmic shape and the combination of simple and compound time:

Ex. 4.

though the relationship is not in the contour of the tunes but in the figures of the dance.

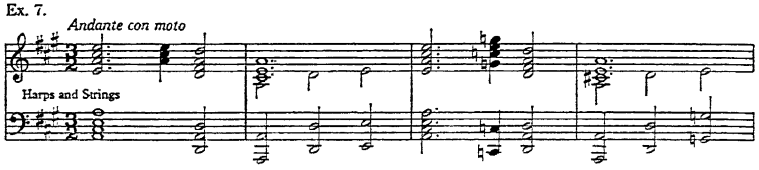
Job stands up and blesses his children during this dance. The blessedness of Job's estate and the beauty of his family life seem to be symbolized in a descending tune against a rising progression of chords of the sixth and 6/4:

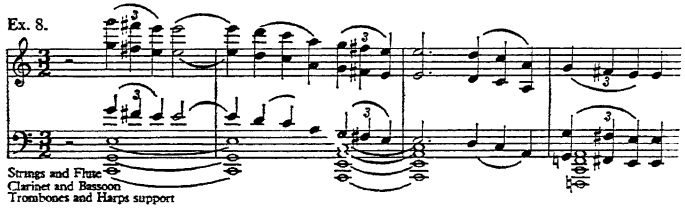
Ex. 5.

This tune is derived from Ex. 1—see the second bar for its germ—and has already been heard with its chordal accompaniment on the entry of Job's family. It is heard again as the curtain goes down when after his trials are over he gazes once more on the distant cornfields and his daughters come in to receive his blessing.

Enter Satan. How is music to depict the Evil One? Evil is moral disorder, a negative quality, that is, not a positive. It is a conception only intelligible by reference to good which man perceives by a direct intuition. He cannot really conceive pure and positive evil. Now music also is a kind of spiritual order, non-moral in kind but bearing an obvious analogy to a moral order—both for instance lead to a kind of harmony. Music is the organization and ordering of auditory experience; beginning with mathematical pitch and going on to the arrangement of notes in a scale, from there to the evolution of tonality, combined in rhythm with temporal organization and in form with the symmetries of sound, the whole art is an evolution of successively higher organization and ordering of its subject-matter. (This is why, incidentally, atonality is doomed to failure from the very nature of music itself.) Key and the whole of the elaborate body of experience known as harmony is therefore an analogue of the moral order and is capable of depicting that immorality which is only intelligible in reference to a moral order—mere chaos expresses nothing either in morals or music. Immorality is not chaos, and cacophony, which is sheer musical disorder, will present nothing except chaos. Evil can therefore be very well represented in music by clashes, distractions, and self-contradictions all within the order of harmony. Satan is therefore introduced in a definite key system. The context is G minor; Satan tears it asunder and leaps out of it into A major via a chord of B flat minor.

Ex. 6.

The syncopation, the leaps outside the octave and the violent antithesis of major and minor tonality all help the effect of disintegration.

In contrast to this the Heavens now open and reveal the Sons of God grouped round the throne (as in Blake's second engraving). They begin to move in a majestic saraband:

Ex. 7.

God summons Satan and says 'Hast thou considered my servant Job?' (Ex. 1). Satan says 'Put forth thy hand now and touch all that he hath and he will curse thee to thy face' (Ex. 6 amplified). God says (Engraving No. 5) 'All that he hath is in thy power' in a phrase of incomparable sweep and authority:

Ex. 8.

The Sons of God resume their saraband; God leaves his throne.

Scene II

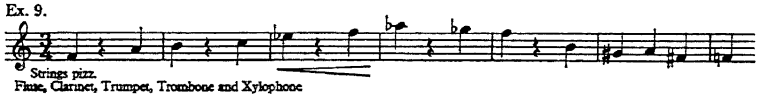
Satan after a triumphal dance usurps the throne.

'So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.'

Satan's Dance.

God's throne is empty. Satan in wild triumph seats himself upon it.

Satan's music with its contradictions of mode, its alternating semitones and its leaps across unrelated key is recalled—Ex. 6—and developed into an animated and angular dance:

Ex. 9.

with a trio in march time and a coda in which the music based on Ex. 6 is heard again as Satan climbs towards the throne. As he kneels in mockery before it the plainsong *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is blazed out in irony on the heavy brass. When with a big gesture he seats himself thereon there is a hint of the tune of Ex. 8, but it breaks off at once into Satan's distracted semitones and ends abruptly.

Scene III

Job's sons and daughters are feasting and dancing when Satan appears and destroys them.

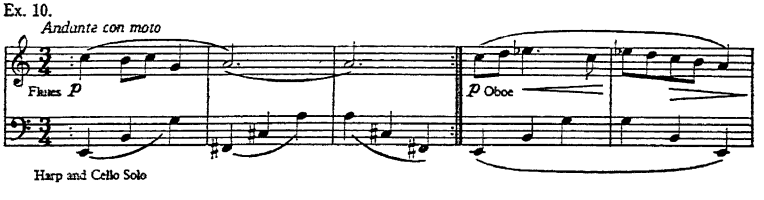
'There came a great wind and smote the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young men and they are dead.'

Minuet of the sons and daughters of Job.

Job's children are feasting and dancing: Satan appears and destroys them.

The composer directs that the dance shall be formal, statuesque, and slightly voluptuous. This is the minuet he writes for it, mostly in three-bar phrases:

Ex. 10.



Satan's stroke is depicted in the juxtaposition of two triads in different rhythmic positions (cf. the end of Ex. 6).

Ex. 11.

This scene is sometimes referred to quite inappropriately as the Bacchanale.

Scene IV

Job's peaceful sleep is disturbed by Satan with terrifying visions of War, Pestilence, and Famine.

'In thoughts from the visions of the night . . . fear came upon me and trembling.'

Job's Dream. Dance of Plague, Pestilence, Famine, and Battle.

Job is quietly asleep. Satan leans over him, and evokes terrible visions which dance round him, foreboding his tribulation to come.

A new Job theme is announced by the violas over a tonic pedal:

Ex. 12.

When Satan enters (without his own theme) the music illustrates numbers 6 and 11 of Blake's engravings. Plague has some curdling consecutive fourths and fifths over one of Vaughan Williams's walking basses in level crotchets. Battle has a martial tune on the trumpets. After the visions have danced round Job they disappear, and the scene leads straight into the next. Hereafter the numbering of the scenes is out of step, as the composer has separated the dance of the Messengers from that of the Hypocrites which follows it.

Scene V

Messengers come to Job with tidings of the destruction of all his possessions and the death of his sons and daughters. Satan introduces Job's Comforters, three wily hypocrites. Their dance at first simulates compassion, but this gradually changes to rebuke and anger. Job rebels: 'Let the day perish wherein I was born.' He invokes his vision of the Godhead,

Scenes V and VI

'There came a messenger.'

Dance of the messengers.

The messengers announce to Job the destruction of all his wealth and the death of his sons and daughters. Job still blesses God.

'Behold happy is the man whom God correcteth.'

Dance of Job's Comforters. Job's Curse. A vision of Satan.

but the opening Heaven reveals Satan upon the throne. Job and his friends shrink in terror.

Satan introduces Job's comforters, three wily hypocrites. Their dance is at first one of apparent sympathy, but gradually changes to rebuke and anger. Job curses God. 'Let the day perish wherein I was born.' Job invokes his vision of God. Heaven opens and reveals Satan seated on God's throne. Job and his friends cower in terror.

Job wakes to a little call from the oboe, and soon processional music is heard for the funeral cortège of Job's sons and their wives. The scene ends with Ex. 12 richly harmonized in diatonic triads.

In the Bible Job's friends are not depicted as 'three wily hypocrites'. On the contrary we read (Job ii. 11–13):

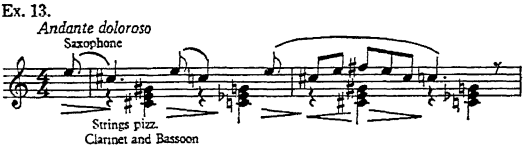
> Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him and to comfort him.
>
> And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven.
>
> So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

Their sympathy seems genuine enough, and though Job lost his temper with their obstinate insistence that his sufferings must be punishments for his sins, they are ultimately reconciled to him (chap. 42). But in Blake's vision they are a 'Satan's Trinity of Accusers' and are represented in Plate X with accusing fingers pointing at him. In Vaughan Williams's music their entry is prefaced by a half-bar of Satan's music, and the stage direction says specifically 'Satan introduces in turn Job's three comforters'. Now

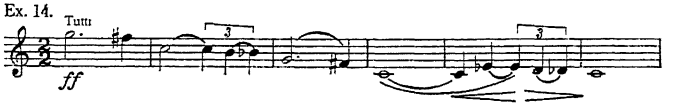
as Satan is Job's own lower nature, just as God is his spiritual self, the comforters are in fact personifications of Job's own sin of obstinate spiritual pride. Outwardly their arguments are fair and plausible but actually they are a form of self-deceit. 'Three wily hypocrites' therefore becomes an appropriate description.

Now hypocrisy consists in seeming one thing and being another; its essence therefore is ambiguity, and ambiguity is not difficult to symbolize in music. A drooping pathetic minor third sounds sympathetic; so for that matter does a drooping major third and either might represent true sympathy, but place one against the other and harmonize in triads and you have complete ambiguity and double dealing, which the oily tones of the saxophone make unctuous and odious:

Ex. 13.



There is a middle section of more vigorous character where they become reproachful but they 'return to their gestures of pretended sympathy', till Job rises and curses God in another descending phrase, Ex. 14, bearing some relationship to Exx. 5 and 8, but with acrid harmony. It is symptomatic of the organic character of the work that all these phrases portraying Job's personality and actions have a family resemblance. Indeed, at a first glance it is easy to mistake them all as mere transformations of the same phrase, but the variations alike in intervals and rhythm are seen on closer scrutiny to amount to more than a 'transformation of theme'.

Ex. 14.

There is a baleful vision of Heaven now usurped by the host of Hell which gradually fades away to be succeeded by a violin solo

of early morning freshness. This is the turning-point of the drama and the beginning of

Scene VI

There enters Elihu who is young and beautiful. 'Ye are old and I am very young.' Job perceives his sin. The Heavens then open, revealing Job's Spiritual Self again enthroned.

Scene VII

'Ye are old and I am very young.'

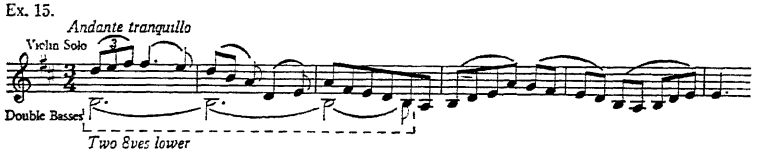
Elihu's Dance of Youth and Beauty.

'Then the Lord answered Job.'

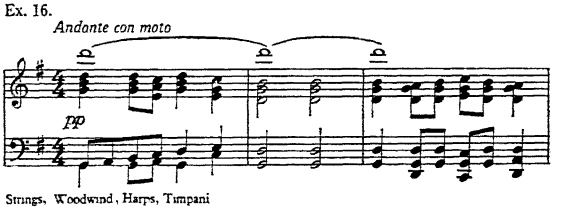
Pavane of the Heavenly Host.

Enter Elihu who is young and beautiful. Heaven opens again and shows God sitting on His Throne surrounded by the heavenly host.

The flowing rhapsody of the unaccompanied violin settles down into an airy melody:

Ex. 15.

After Elihu's dance 'Heaven gradually shines behind the stars. Dim figures are seen dancing a solemn dance. As Heaven grows lighter, they are seen to be the Sons of the Morning dancing before God's throne' as in Blake's Plate XIV. (This is the stage direction.)

The music of the Pavane consists of:

Ex. 16.

a three-bar phrase which alternates and combines with a variant of Ex. 8.

In the old instrumental suites pavanes were followed by galliards. So here, and the next scene opens with a galliard, a quicker dance in a different rhythm.

Scene VII

Satan again appeals to Job's Godhead, claiming the victory, but is repelled and driven down by the Sons of the Morning. Job's household build an altar and worship with musical instruments, while the Heavenly dance continues.

Scene VIII

'All the Sons of God shouted for joy.'

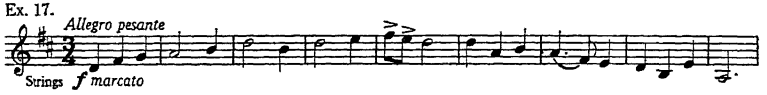
Galliard of the Sons of the Morning.

'My servant Job shall pray for you.'

Altar Dance and heavenly Pavane.

Satan appeals again to God but is driven down by the Sons of the Morning. Job and his household build an altar and worship God with musical instruments. The heavenly dance continues.

The appearance of Satan to claim his victory over Job and God's denial and sentence of banishment upon him are depicted in eight bars of Satan's music (Ex. 6) and five bars of the music of Godhead (Ex. 8). Then the Sons of the Morning drive Satan down during the galliard on this sturdy tune:

Ex. 17.

The scene changes from Heaven to Earth. Young men and women raise an altar and dance round it. The strings hold a widespread chord of G minor (without the B flat) in its second inversion, through which the oboes weave a tune:

Ex. 18.

to be joined presently, when Job rises to bless the altar, by Ex. 12 in counterpoint with it. The heavenly dance begins again (Ex. 16), while the dance on earth continues (Ex. 18) and leads to a tableau over a tremendous cadence of clashing diatonic chords such as have been heard in a milder form pianissimo at the first disclosure

of Heaven just before the Saraband. See Ex. 7 for the outline of it.

Scene VIII

Job sits a humbled man in the sunrise of restored prosperity, surrounded by his family, upon whom he bestows his blessing.

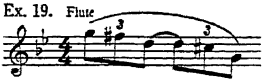
Scene IX

'So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.'

Epilogue.

Job, an old and humbled man, sits again surrounded by his family. He blesses his children.

Ex. 1 is heard as the curtain goes up on the same scene as the opening. Job's friends come and give him presents. His three daughters enter. How they came to be restored to him is not made clear either in the ballet or in Blake or even in the Bible, which simply states laconically (chapter xlii, v. 13) after a catalogue of his riches 'He had also seven sons and three daughters', and adds that they were the fairest women in the land. But the music falls away to a mellow tissue of sound, very full but very quiet, while the dancers group themselves as in Plates XIX and XX. The Epilogue is a recapitulation of the opening music including the descending triplet figure which belongs to the daughters of Job:

Ex. 19. Flute

The final cadence comes to rest on B flat, but the key feeling has been G minor. The horns hold a dominant pedal-point D up to within a dozen bars of the end. This resolves on to a softer pedal-point G held for three bars by the violas, and then almost imperceptibly through some fluidly progressing harmony the music subsides on to a B flat held by double-basses and timpani. The actual chord of B flat is delayed for another bar and is even then reached on a weak half-beat so as to make it as unobtrusive as possible. The instruments fade out one after the other till only the violoncellos and basses are holding their B flat niente. The counterpoint moves steadily in quavers till quite near the end producing chord progressions as it goes, but the fundamental harmony has

been moving very slowly as already described, and though anything like a conventional full close, however elaborately disguised, is avoided, yet the sense of finality is complete. The balance of keys is not achieved by mechanical means, and B flat major, lying as it does on that slightly higher plane than G minor, is when so reached like the keel of the home-bound boat running its nose up on the shore.

Riders to the Sea

Wagner in his day made a great fuss about a distinction which he drew between opera and music-drama. Actually all opera is precisely music-drama and in its early days was called *dramma per musica*; it is from its nature a play carried on either in or with music. Wagner wished to cut clear of certain associations that had grown round the word 'opera', one such set of associations implying formal division into recitative, aria, and ensemble. This formal implication he specially wished to avoid and to substitute for it his *unendliche Melodie* and a symphonic style of writing for the orchestra, just as Vaughan Williams preferred to call the ballet *Job* a masque because of certain associations of the word 'ballet'. Such terminological preferences, though not in the last resort logically tenable, have this much justification: that they imply differences of emphasis; within a composite art like opera, where to the normal opposition between words and tones there are added the complicating factors of plot, scenery, mime, and movement, the equilibrium between them will be struck at different points in different instances. The problem of the operatic composer is always to reconcile such divergent claims. The first and most fundamental of them is that of pace: drama moves normally at a rate faster than real life, it is carried on in dialogue uttered only a little slower than conversational speech, it develops by concentration; in music, on the other hand, the mere addition of tone to a spoken sentence in itself slows up the utterance, and the melodic line asserts musical claims that interfere with the normal speed and

shape and rhythm of the words to which it is set, and music as such develops by expansion to such an extent that action has often to be held up on the stage in order to allow time enough to the music to make its points in its own musical way. The history of opera is the tale of the different ways in which this equilibrium has been successfully struck, these competing claims reconciled. One way, that of German *Singspiel* and English comic opera, is to work on two planes alternately and break openly from speech into song, and vice versa. Next above this in point of musical saturation is the division into recitative and air; farther on comes the complete absorption of the text into music, as in Wagner and Puccini. Wagner thought that he was acting in defence of the verbal text in floating it, as it were, on a sea of orchestral sound, but in point of fact in his music-drama music has retained its position as the senior partner, and those who are keen to uphold the claims of the poem as well as that of dramatic verisimilitude may legitimately declare that in the upshot they get no better treatment from Wagner than from so 'operatic' a composer as Verdi.

Now opera came into being at the Renaissance as the result of early experiments in the recitation of Greek tragedy. Aristotle, generalizing from the experience of the Greeks themselves in presenting plays, mentions two features of tragedy, which we can recognize as necessary under the condition of their presentation in a large open-air theatre. Tragedy, he says, is the representation of a serious action which has a certain size and impressiveness (*μίμησις πραξέως σπουδαίας καὶ μέγεθος ἐχούσης*), and it is presented with certain embellishments (*ἡδύσμενα*) among which were the musical elements of rhythm and melody and whatever the Greeks meant by harmony (which was certainly not what we mean). This implies a kind of quasi-musical delivery—intoning or recitative. But music in the full sense was also used in certain parts, notably in the chanting of the chorus who commented on the action in set pieces. The tone of the human speaking voice tends to change in pitch under pressure of emotion—to drop when it is serious or impressive, to rise even to a scream when it is excited, and to do both under the conflicting interplay of changing emotions in a complicated situation. So again we reach recitative,

declamation, and rhapsody, all of which imply some sort of melodic line (*μέλος*) instead of the dry tones of ordinary speech. The Florentine experimenters of the sixteenth century, in trying to find the appropriate kind of recitative for the newly discovered classical dramas, hit on precisely the 'embellished' speech in which the voice spoke its words to notes of different pitch from which it could break at the intenser moments into song, as any ballad singer among the medieval minstrels could have told them. Here, in fact, was recitative and aria, and here was *unendliche Melodie*; here indeed was music-drama or opera.

This same thing is what Vaughan Williams has done in *Riders to the Sea*. To increase the impressiveness and the emotional compulsion of the original play of J. M. Synge he has assigned notes of definite pitch to all its lines. It is an opera in recitative, and the voice part never takes wing in song save perhaps at the consummation of the tragedy, where Maurya's words rise on a curve of melody largamente over diatonic chords. Elsewhere the musician makes himself the servant and follower of the poet rather than leader and master. In this sense *Riders to the Sea* may claim to be music-drama. It is a word-for-word setting of a play; the composer has taken no melodic liberties but has been faithful to every vocal inflexion of the speaking voice, yet he has at the same time converted it from elocution into music. But for all his restraint he has done what only music can do—crystallized its poignant emotions, heightened their expression and suffused it all with a tenderness that accomplishes for us that purge by pity (*κάθαρσις δι' ἐλέου*) of which Aristotle spoke.

The aesthetic justification of the parlando as opposed to the cantando style is to be found in the appropriateness of the method to the subject-matter. Synge's play is a tragedy in undertones. At its opening Nora and Cathleen converse in low voices to avoid rousing the old woman, and this subdued start sets the tone for the whole play. There is no place here for steady streams of tone or strong-winged flights of melody; all is broken—muttered almost—and Vaughan Williams's themes reproduce the sorrow-haunted atmosphere of the Irish cottage by the implacable sea in the downward droop of their contour. Only after the final catastrophe,

when the sea can do no more to hurt or harm these islanders, do the phrases reverse their trend and begin to rise.[1]

The method derives not from Wagner (or even Wolf) but from Mussorgsky, though the opera nearest akin to *Riders to the Sea* is Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Here we have a similarly subdued dialogue and a drier, less melodious recitation than we get in *Boris Godunov*. In *Pelléas et Mélisande* the characters are shadowy almost to the point of unreality. In *Boris Godunov* they are real and solid. In *Riders to the Sea* they are real but oppressed and overwhelmed. The motives of the composer in each case are therefore alike in that they all three wish to reflect in music the natural intonations of speech but different in so far as the emotions to be conveyed are different. Mussorgsky aims at realistic portraiture, Debussy at the creation of people in a world of shadows. Vaughan Williams aims at a true presentation of real people (like Mussorgsky) and (like Debussy) at the creation of an enveloping atmosphere of half-tones. In dimensions, dramatic method, and layout for small orchestra and female chorus it shows a close kinship with Holst's *Savitri*.

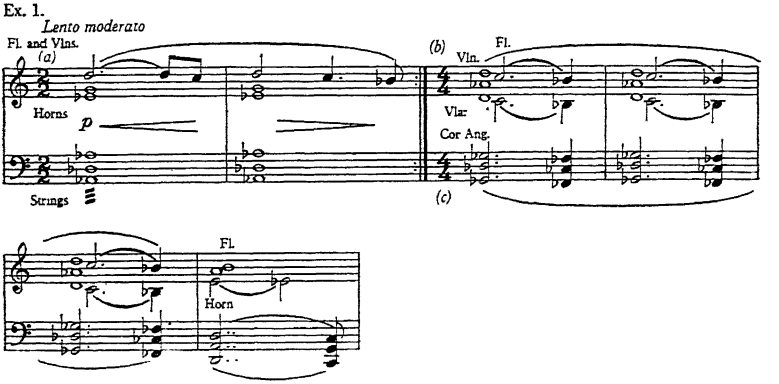
It is quite unlike anything else that he has done. *Hugh the Drover* is a pure romantic opera, *Sir John in Love* near akin to a folk-opera, *The Poisoned Kiss*, which was to follow, a pure comic opera, in form as well as subject. This is a tragic music-drama in one act. It was sketched in 1926 and finished in the following year, but was not published till 1936. It is lightly scored with only one each of the woodwind except that there is a second flute and the only clarinet is a bass clarinet; two horns and one trumpet are all the brass, and a limited number of strings (not more than two double basses and the rest in proportion) is prescribed; the percussion includes a Sea Machine. There is also a wordless chorus of female voices in four parts. The stage directions of the original play are

[1] That is broadly speaking. Maurya so constantly croons half to herself that her phrases usually begin with the rise of a third, and this initial rise influences the shape of her themes. Bartley speaks in level tones; the two girls, whose emotions are unstable, are less consistent but mostly follow the natural rise in pitch of the voice from the start of a sentence. It is not, however, the verbal phrases of which I am thinking but the accompanying orchestral themes which show a predominantly downward trend.

occasionally modified in the opera and a few sentences have been omitted.

The scene is set in the kitchen of a cottage on an island off the west coast of Ireland. The daily business of the inhabitants must be carried on by sea, and the sea, as all seafarers know, takes its toll of human life. The sea is the unseen protagonist of this drama, and its ceaseless murmur, its swelling, the strident impact of restless green water is heard at the outset:

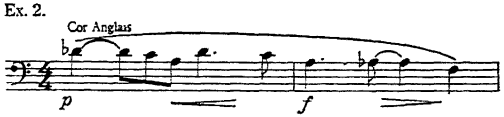
Ex. 1.

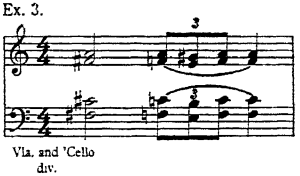


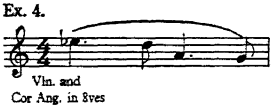
This is almost a leitmotive, though it is not always presented whole, as Wagner would do it, when the sound of the sea blows through the open door or is uppermost in the mind of the persons of the play. Sometimes only the bass (*c*) is heard, sometimes with rhythmic variations the drooping phrase of the upper part.

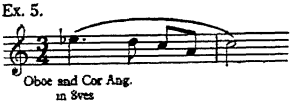
When the curtain rises Cathleen (*Soprano*) is busy in the room and finally sits down to her spinning-wheel; the only music is a long bare line of melody supported by an occasional chord. The door opens and the sound of the sea is heard—a version of Ex. 1. Cathleen's younger sister Nora (*Soprano*) enters and asks 'Where is she?' 'She' is their mother Maurya (*Contralto*), who at the moment is lying down 'and maybe sleeping if she's able'. Nora produces a bundle from under her shawl. It contains 'a shirt and a plain stocking got off a drowned man in Donegal'. The question is: Was that drowned man their brother Michael, and could his body have been washed away so far north as Donegal? All the dialogue in which they debate this possibility and the advisability

of telling their mother anything about the find is carried on to a descending phrase related to Ex. 1 but not used specifically again:

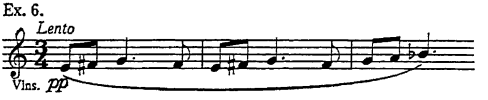
Ex. 2.

But though this is not a leitmotive at all, it sets the shape for much of the closely related thematic material of which the opera is built. The next motif, however, recurs when either of the women refers to Michael's clean burial at sea and, as God is invoked when such thoughts are uttered, it carries with it a prayer:

Ex. 3.

The door blows open—Ex. 1 is heard—and Cathleen looks out: is the sea bad enough to stop Bartley (*Baritone*), now the only surviving brother, from crossing and taking the horses to Galway Fair? 'I won't stop him,' says Nora, and adds that 'Herself does be saying prayers half through the night and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute' (Ex. 3). Two other variants of the sea-motif, Ex. 1, are used to describe the state of wind and tide, with wider intervals and more agitated rhythm:

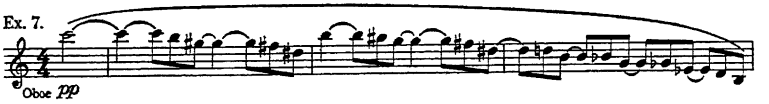
Ex. 4.

and

Ex. 5.

The girls debate whether to open the parcel and see if they can identify the clothes, but they are afraid they may be interrupted by the appearance of their mother. So they hide it for the moment in the peat-loft. Much of their smothered and hasty dialogue is set senza misura to light semiquavers, often without accompaniment, sometimes with a wisp of counterpoint. As soon as the bundle is

hidden and Cathleen is descending the ladder from the loft Maurya appears and chides them for being extravagant with the fuel—isn't there enough turf already down for the rest of the day? Maurya's principal motif is a phrase of which the significant and most persistent portion is the first three notes rising the interval of a third:

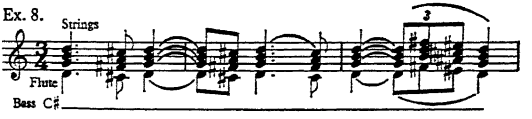
Ex. 6.

This is played by muted violins on its first appearance, which is when Nora says, 'She is moving about on the bed', but when Maurya actually appears it is heard more positively on the bassoon as it is subsequently in the opera. Maurya, sitting by the fire, begins to think about Bartley's journey to the mainland with the horses. Surely he will not go with the wind rising from the south-west? A new, long, trailing line of descending melody accompanies her reflections on her surviving son, but it seems to be less Bartley's motif than Maurya's reflections on the menfolk she has lost, for it occurs again first when she has the intuition that he will not return alive and again after his body has been brought in when it is sung by the keening women.

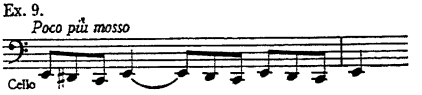
Ex. 7.



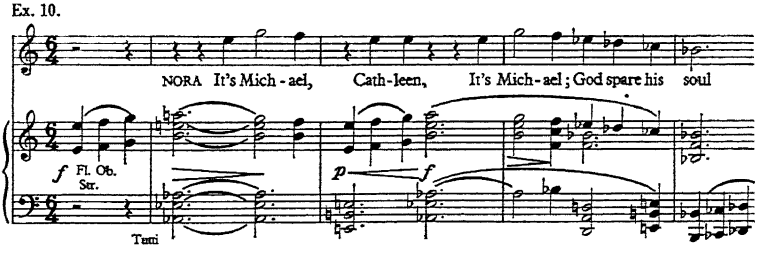
Bartley himself comes in in a hurry; he wants a bit of rope for a halter. Maurya (Ex. 6) is unwilling for him to take it—it may be wanted for burying Michael if he should be washed up. She tries also to deter him from going on his journey, and as she becomes more urgent in her pleading the orchestral texture thickens, the music becomes more rhythmic, and the pace poco più mosso. Bartley ignores her words and turns to Cathleen with instructions what to do on the farm while he is away. Then he turns his attention to the voyage. Is the boat coming to the pier? The music for this is derived from Ex. 1—first the triads in the bass (*c*), and then a dotted-note phrase related to (*b*). From these two is derived

a progression of triads that is primarily but not invariably associated with the drowning of Michael.

Ex. 8.

Bartley goes, but Maurya does not give him her blessing; instead she cries out in despair that they will not see him again. The girls lose patience with the old woman and all her ill-omened words (allusion to Ex. 7). Wisely they find something for her to do. Bartley has gone off not only without his mother's blessing, but without his food, so Cathleen bids Maurya take the bread and intercept him at the well on his way down to the sea with the horses. A new movement begins in the bass, an insistent round-and-round figure:

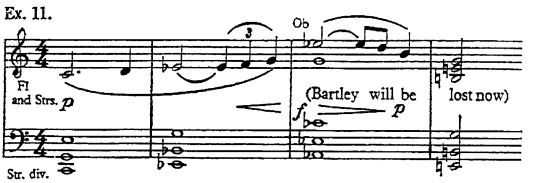
Ex. 9.

Fragments of this figure and variations of Ex. 8 appear up and down the score. Maurya takes a stick and hobbles off. This is the opportunity for Cathleen and Nora to examine the bundle. They conduct a quick conversation prefaced by Ex. 8, at first unaccompanied but subsequently against an undulating line of counterpoint.

They open the bundle:

Ex. 10.

So easily under the stress of emotion does the voice rise from parlando to singing, from recitative to arioso; neither of the two sopranos (Cathleen and Nora) has touched a G before. They quickly relapse into recitative as they discuss the dropped stitches

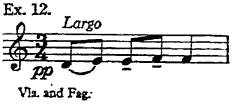
in the knitted stocking that confirm their fears. But Ex. 10 returns as Cathleen thinks of the pity of a great rower and fisher floating away in the far north and leaving nothing behind of himself but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking. Again this more impassioned singing is broken off because they hear Maurya returning. A mere whispered chord supports their hasty conversation while they hide the bundle again. Ex. 6 announces Maurya's entrance. She begins to keen. The girls question her, did she see Bartley, did she give him his bread, but all they can get out of her in reply is a cry that she has seen 'the fearfulest thing', an omen of the worst. Cathleen goes to the window to see if she can see Bartley. Yes, he is riding the mare, and the grey pony is following behind. She now presses her mother to tell them what it is she has seen. Maurya's vision is accompanied by consecutive 6/4 chords. She declares she has seen Michael riding behind Bartley, and we hear the triads of Ex. 3. She tells her story in greater detail—chords of the 6/4 again: Bartley came first, and something choked the words in her throat when she tried to give him the blessing she had withheld in the cottage, and then on the grey pony she beheld Michael with fine clothes upon him and new shoes on his feet. Cathleen now begins to keen and in her anguish she touches G sharp. The orchestra plays loud chords, swaying chords of the sixth in the dotted rhythm that has been so prominent throughout.

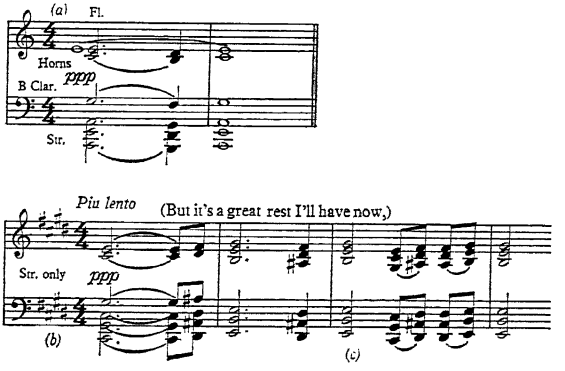
Maurya now begins a long solo over a new figure that is extensively used in combination with a derivative of Ex. 7—note that it begins with Maurya's characteristic rising third.

Ex. 11.

She rehearses the number of her sons and their deaths—for she regards Bartley as already lost. The sound of the chorus is heard for the first time, off stage, keening in the distance. There is a momentary interruption as Cathleen and Nora catch its sound and hear a cry from the shore. Maurya resumes, and the chorus

increases from two to four parts, while the orchestra plays Ex. 1 (*c*), the groundbass of the sea; to that is soon added (*a*), and when Maurya relates how the dripping body of her son Patch was brought home the first four bars of Ex. 1 are reproduced as they were first heard.

The door opens and old women come in to keen. The score is now dominated by the figure

Ex. 12.

which in one form or another constantly recurs till the end of the opera. The action quickens, though the dialogue continues at the same steady rate of declamation over Ex. 12. The girls tell Maurya about Michael and hand her the bundle of his clothes as proof that he has been found, and the old women tell the girls that what they see approaching is a cortège bearing the body of Bartley who was knocked over into the sea by the grey pony and carried out to the rocks by the surf. The body is brought in and laid on the table: Maurya goes to its head and begins, 'They are all gone now and there isn't anything more the sea can do for me.' The chorus commences to keen over Ex. 1. She takes holy water to a solemn progression consisting of superimposed triads, Ex. 13 (*a*); the tonality is poised between C sharp minor and E major as Maurya reaches the ultimate calm of stoical resignation, Ex. 13 (*b*) and (*c*):

Ex. 13.

This becomes arioso in spite of the interjections of Cathleen and Nora, who continue in the same slow sonorous vein, remarking to each other that their mother is getting old and broken. Maurya herself, however, breaks off with free declamation as she passes from C sharp into F minor. When she reverts to sustained singing for her prayer for the souls of all alive, the key becomes a clear E major, and the accompaniment is like the sustained chords of an organ. The keeners have a passage poco animato before Maurya speaks again of Michael and Bartley. The keeners sing phrases of Ex. 7, until the signature once more changes to four sharps and Ex. 13 (*c*) is heard against Maurya's last words: 'No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.' The stage darkens but a gust of wind blows open the door and the sea is heard again (Ex. 1). A solo soprano voice is heard off stage as the rays of the setting sun shine in through the door. The voice sings two strands of tune compounded of many of the figures that have been heard —the dotted-note figure and derivatives from Exx. 7 and 9—while the orchestra sustains and augments a sequence of chords taken from Ex. 13, but now smoothed out in rhythm so as to come to a standstill on an almost inaudible chord of E as the stage becomes quite dark.

The Poisoned Kiss

The Poisoned Kiss was composed during 1927–8, but had to wait several years before it was produced on any stage. Finally, after a certain amount of revision, in which some numbers were scrapped and others added, it was put on by a company consisting mainly of professionals but dependent for its staffing on an organization of amateurs such as has been responsible for a great many of the interesting operatic enterprises in this country. Oxford and Cambridge have both been forward in producing such operas as our various operatic organizations could hardly be expected to undertake with any hope of support from their respective publics.

It was appropriate that *The Poisoned Kiss* should have its first performance (on 12 May 1936) at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge,

the composer being a Cambridge man—he is an honorary fellow of Trinity—and the Cambridge 'syndicate' of amateurs, local professionals, and imported soloists could be relied on to tackle a comic opera in a spirit of robust good humour. It is a comic opera in the strict sense of a stage piece in which spoken dialogue alternates with separate musical 'numbers'. Its character, however, is more closely defined in its official description as a romantic extravaganza. The two elements, the romance and the extravagance, the constant juxtaposition of magic and modernism, the lyrical music and the witty words, set up an unstable equilibrium that adds piquancy to both. The libretto has, however, been adversely criticized, not for its romance but for its extravagance. It must therefore be scrutinized, though it is well to bear in mind that the author was writing not for cold print but for the theatre, and that in the theatre her shafts and sallies, her witticisms and topical allusions found their mark and raised their laughs at once.

The libretto was founded, as a note prefixed to the score informs us, on incidents taken from a story called 'The Poison Maid' which is found in Richard Garnett's collection of short stories called *The Twilight of the Gods*. (But it is a far cry from *Götterdämmerung* to *The Poisoned Kiss*!) Garnett himself was apparently indebted to another short story, 'Rapaccini's Daughter', in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, though according to a note in the 1888 edition of Garnett he wrote his story in 'entire forgetfulness' of Hawthorne's tale 'which nevertheless he had certainly read'. It may very well be that what alienated the critics of Miss Evelyn Sharp's libretto was precisely the simple innocence of a nineteenth-century story, garnished though it was by satire of contemporary events and fashions such as have afforded matter for comic treatment on the stage from Aristophanes onwards, and in music from *The Beggar's Opera* and Mozart to Gilbert and Sullivan and *Coq d'Or*. We are not amused, however, by childish fantasies today. There has been a change of taste. Fiction is earnest, and when it is not dealing with imaginary crime it portrays slices of real life, and whether it is proletarian life or high life that is the novelist's subject, his method is realistic. Victorian fiction, we say, is mere escapism. Love's young dream

is a dream no longer but a compensatory erotic fantasy, and if we wish to suspend the laws of causation as we know them we do not retreat into the magic of the past but into the brave new worlds of Wellsian speculation. There is, in fact, a certain impatience with the machinery of magic, and if in reading Garnett's 'The Poison Maid' one smiles at the fanciful twist of the story, there is also in our smile a trace of superciliousness. It may be conceded, too, that in the second act of the opera the magic machinery, as operated by the somewhat clumsy antics of Hob, Gob, and Lob, whose function it is to precipitate the fatal kiss, creaks a little—and magical machines ought not to creak. It may also be admitted that in some instances the author's usually felicitous touch in setting a piece of modern slang in sharp antithesis to some piece of high-falutin magic fumbles for a moment over some topical allusion that seems out of the picture. Hob, Gob, and Lob disguised as journalists afford an example, which is in marked contrast to the extremely funny antithesis to be found in the lines of Dipsacus, the professional magician and father of the bride. But Hob, Gob, and Lob are necessary not merely for musical reasons but for the symmetry of the plot.

This symmetry, as in *Così fan tutte*, is an element of strength in a well-constructed libretto. The book, whether you like it or not, is so laid out in three acts as to give each character opportunity to define him or herself in set solos or in ensemble numbers, while the opposing forces of Magician versus Empress are disposed so as to give a different balance in each act. Thus Dipsacus leads off the first act and his influence dominates it. The two lovers, Amaryllus (lyrical tenor), the Empress's son, and Tormentilla (soprano), the Magician's daughter, have the second act almost to themselves, except for the undercurrent provided throughout by the love affair between their two respective servants Gallanthus, light tenor and a bit of a clown, and Angelica, soubrette with all the characteristics of a chit—a ready tongue, an interest in men, and a passion for romance in story or cinema. The Empress Persicaria (contralto) descends upon the last act and extricates the plot from the crisis which it reached when the poisoned kiss was exchanged between the two lovers at the end of Act II. Note the pretty idea

of conferring botanical names on all the principal creatures of this fantasy. Hob, Gob, and Lob are the personal attendants of Dipsacus; their opposite numbers attached to the Empress's suite are three Mediums who pursue the psychic business that was fashionable in Bond Street at one time. These six persons of the play are cast according to vocal type and give the composer scope for trios and sextets. In the end each character is paired off with his opposite number, and after a momentary flash from the Empress—'Is this a night club? What means this disgraceful scene in my palace?'—who has forgotten the force of her own example in burying the hatchet and reuniting herself with Dipsacus, all the principals and chorus sing a grand ensemble 'alla hornpipe' to the refrain:

Love has conquered,
Hearts united,
Wrong is righted
Won by capture
Thrilled with rapture
Wedding guests are all invited;
Do not tarry,
Come and marry,
Love triumphant,
Hearts united.

This jingling verse is in the ordinary comic opera vein and the hornpipe measure ties up, as a concerted finale should, all the threads of the opera. But the theme of love triumphant is more than the skeleton of a piece for the theatre and it lifts the lovers' music into true romance. For the kernel of the opera is the conquest of hate by love. Tormentilla has been brought up on poisons in order that her first kiss shall destroy the man to whom she gives it. Dipsacus has kept her apart from the world in order that he may choose her victim for her, the son of the Empress. His plot succeeds up to the point of the exchange of the fatal kiss and then miscarries because true love is more potent than poison. Here is the core of romance at the heart of the extravaganza. In this outline the libretto follows closely the plot of Garnett's story. The root idea of a poisonous maiden comes from Hawthorne; Garnett

embodied it in the idea of revenge worked by the parent of one lover upon the parent of the other; Miss Sharp created all the subsidiary characters, put the story into dramatic form and served it up in a modern, not to say topical, setting. She was peculiarly well qualified to discharge this task of a new W. S. Gilbert, for her literary career has been divided between the writing of imaginative stories—she was a contributor to the famous Yellow Book—and journalism for the *Manchester Guardian* and other papers. Her sympathies are at the opposite pole from Gilbert's, but she has his way of touching off a fashionable foible with a shaft of satire, and in so far as a poisonous bride is an antinomy her subject leaves her with a Gilbertian situation to deal with. But the element of romance differentiates her libretto from anything that Gilbert ever did outside *The Yeomen of the Guard*, in which human feeling succeeded in breaking through. The sister of Cecil Sharp, with whom he was closely associated in the folk-music revival, was a natural collaborator for Dr. Vaughan Williams; the writer of fairy tales and children's books has a light touch for handling magic; the wife of the late H. W. Nevinson and herself a politician from the days of Women's Suffrage onwards has the salt of satire, so potent for keeping comedy sweet, in her literary economy. A libretto from such a writer is no colourless theatrical construction; it is playful, it is strongly knit, and it is witty. English people do not like wit; they prefer humour, of which they are less afraid, and it is a tenable criticism to urge that the comedy in the composer's music is more often humorous than witty. But there are a number of clever witticisms in the score, notably in the music for the Mediums and the deliberately sentimental duet put into the mouths of Dipsacus and Persicaria in the last act (cf. Ex. 19). But no comic opera is the worse for being both witty and humorous at once. In the last resort a composer is responsible for any libretto he chooses to set, and that Dr. Vaughan Williams found this one inspiring is apparent from the music it elicited from him.

The opera however has not had the success that might have been expected with a public that likes comic opera. The music is entrancing, but the plot seems to lumber in spite of the witty sallies of the libretto which come up with surprisingly topical

freshness. I have only heard one performance that came off exactly as its authors intended it should—by the students of the Royal Academy of Music in 1947.

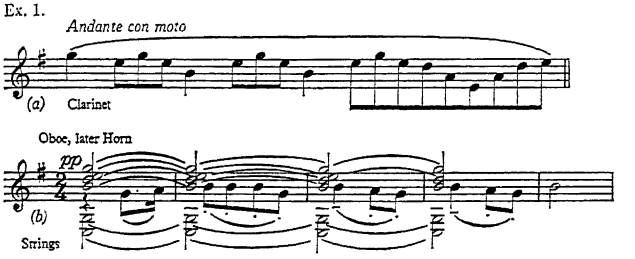
The Overture contains a number of the chief airs in the opera which are loosely strung together. The composer directs that it be played with the house lights up so that it shall not hush all conversation in the auditorium and so produce too reverent an approach to the absurdities that are to follow. This subconscious assimilation of music is in point of fact the best preparation for an evening in which effortless entertainment and solid artistic pleasure are to be combined. For when the various tunes occur in their dramatic context they are at once fresh and familiar to the mind of the listener. Fresh because he has not in any degree learned them, familiar because they have in fact already fallen upon his ear. These tunes are in themselves fresh enough in all conscience and, though they cannot be called familiar, they are at any rate cast in the old lyrical manner derived from English folk-song and English polyphony which the composer had long before evolved for his own personal and distinctive utterance. We have never heard them before but their idiom is encouragingly familiar.

Act I

The scene is the heart of a remote forest. Dipsacus's house is discernible in the darkness, and we know what it is because it bears the sign: *Dipsacus*: *Necromancer, Consultations Daily*. Another sign warning us what to expect bears the legend 'Beware of the Serpent'. The business in hand is to get the sun to rise. Forest creatures utter deterrent noises over grisly forest music—a modern Wolf's Glen in fact without diminished sevenths but with plenty of chromaticism. There is a little trouble about the sunrise but Dipsacus comes out, drives off the nocturnal chorus with a gesture and ushers in the dawn. Gallanthus next appears in a nervy condition after a night spent in this spell-bound wood. The least noise —and plenty of noises are provided—frightens him and his music goes backwards and forwards between 2/4 and 4/4 time. During his agitation the sun rises and a window in Dipsacus's house is

flung open; Angelica the servant maid appears at it, heralded by an arpeggio of the subdominant ninth from the harp. The scena which follows may be said to be in G. The signature oscillates between one sharp and two flats, but the G major of Angelica's aubade is strongly tinged with E minor. After the harp a flute cadenza and a little tune create a musical atmosphere something like that of the beginning of *The Lark Ascending*:

Ex. 1.

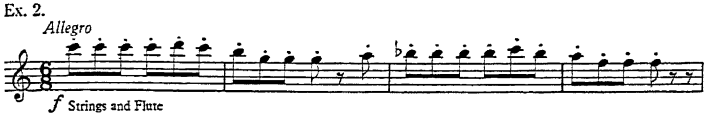


This is daybreak right enough, and Angelica soon comes out of the house with the early morning appurtenances of pail and broom. The note of deliberate bathos, to be sounded time and again through the opera, is struck at once.

Day is dawning,
Folks are yawning.

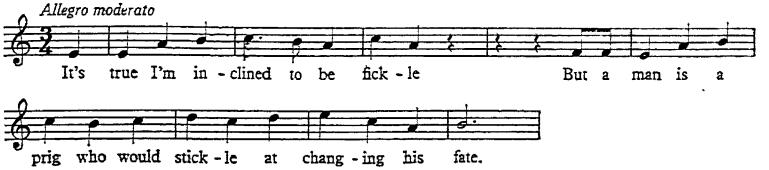
This couplet is sung to a melody derived from (*a*), the continuation of her laborious salute to the dawn makes use of (*b*). She soon breaks off like any normally constituted servant-maid, before the species disappeared, into a grumble about her 'place'—in light recitative, this, and finally she encounters the dithering Gallanthus. They exchange information and compare notes in spoken dialogue. They get on fine. Soon there is talk of love and they break into a duet 'It's really time', a verse each to a simple ballad melody of sixteen bars, and then a verse together. The melody is only simple in sound. It is not susceptible of analysis according to any formula of *a b a*, but the constituent phrases make allusions to each other's intervals and patterns and so yield a strong organic tune. The affair which is progressing so smoothly and rapidly is interrupted by the appearance of three hobgoblins, Hob, Gob, and Lob, and the forest chorus of witches, goblins, and animals. They

complain of Dipsacus and their terms of service. When the magician himself appears he upbraids them for slackness on this, the day of days, when his long cherished plans of revenge are about to mature. He includes Angelica in his strictures. To her excuse that she has not before been in service with a necromancer he replies in a patter song 'I'm a Sorcerer Bold', in which she insinuates some comments, as do the Hobgoblins. The rhythm of the song matches the dance with which its verses alternate:

Ex. 2.

The opera is thus gathering speed—and variety of melody. A duet for Angelica and Dipsacus follows, but since it too consists of vivacious patter its inclusion is optional.

The time has now come to introduce the hero. Amaryllus and Gallanthus walk on to the stage vacated for them and straightway begin a duet on the Prince's susceptibility to female charm:

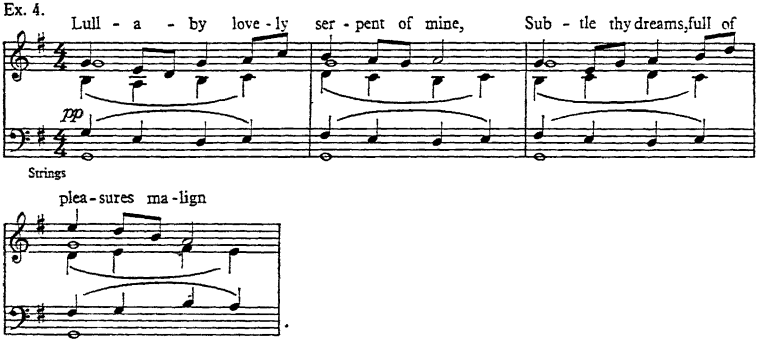
Ex. 3.



Note how the caesura in the fourth bar of a ten-bar phrase varies the balance without upsetting it. This is matched in Gallanthus's retort (a bright G major against this Aeolian modal E) by a three-fold sequence in the enumeration of Amaryllus's former flames. But this time it is the real thing, declares Amaryllus in dialogue, for he has seen Tormentilla and believing her to be in danger has struck her pet cobra, not yet realizing that young lady's abnormal tastes. At this moment Tormentilla enters carrying her pet and in a fury with the aggressor who has hit it. With one woman in a temper and one young man in love, the other woman ready to take advantage of anything that may develop and her lover dithering with excitement, the situation is ready for a quartet of conflicting emotions (two sopranos and two tenors). This changes

half-way through from a quasi-patter (allegro vivace) to a lullaby (andantino) when Tormentilla sits down and rocks the injured cobra to sleep. Here we feel the full force of the antithesis between innocence and poison that is the dominating idea of Hawthorne's tale. Tormentilla sings:

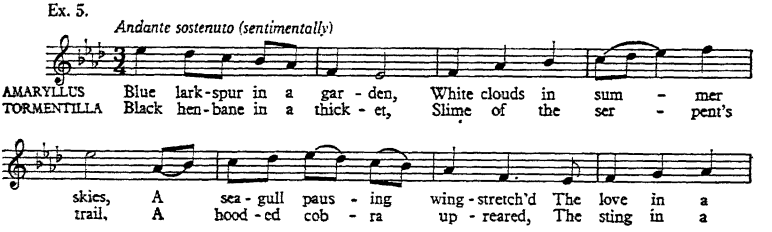
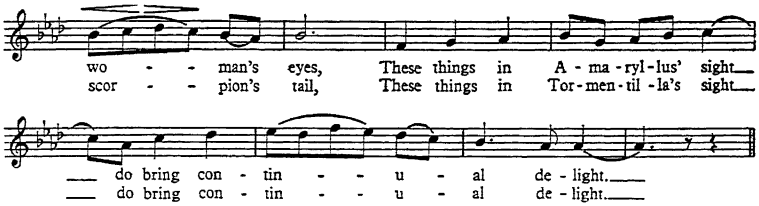
Ex. 4.



Then as the cobra falls into a peaceful doze she asks for a soothing drink for herself (vitriol or cyanide) and the others join in over this tonic pedal and narcotic harmony. The words, however, are not in the least like soothing syrup: Tormentilla continues the lullaby and Amaryllus asks to be allowed to join in, but Angelica says, 'I wish she'd stop that row and drink it up', while Gallanthus's contribution to the queer symposium is 'O damn his eyes, why can't he stop his blasted lullaby'. The quartet finishes more animatedly with a discussion of the poison cup.

The plot has now to thicken and the two principals to fall properly in love. So we have a duet. As this is probably the loveliest song-melody in the opera it must be quoted. There are the usual three verses—one each and one together. The two sets of words under the tune show that bitter-sweetness is still the prevalent and piquant flavour.

Ex. 5.



After another optional song by Amaryllus on the subject of his previous infatuations there is a dramatic number in which things of various sorts happen. Dipsacus gets to work on his magic business, raises a storm, and keeps the lovers apart by a spell. Tormentilla wants to know of her father what all the fuss is about. Dipsacus then explains the story of his early love and his plot for vengeance by means of the poison kiss which Tormentilla is to deliver on the son of his enemy. Pompous as ever, Dipsacus delivers himself in a mock eighteenth-century ballad in B minor (except that the leading notes are all flat). Tormentilla listens with growing understanding and hardening resistance. She declines to be a party to the plan: 'Why should I slay this innocent boy for the sake of your two-penny half-penny love affair twenty years ago?' There is an optional trio in patter (presto) in which father and daughter rage furiously across the plebeian comments of Angelica. Tormentilla now faces the fact that she must on no account see Amaryllus again and laments her predicament in a wistful song, 'Oh, who would be unhappy me?' This is as detachable as, and no more unintelligible in its allusions to the context than, many a Sullivan air from the Savoy operas, Yum-Yum's 'The sun and I', for instance, in *The Mikado*.

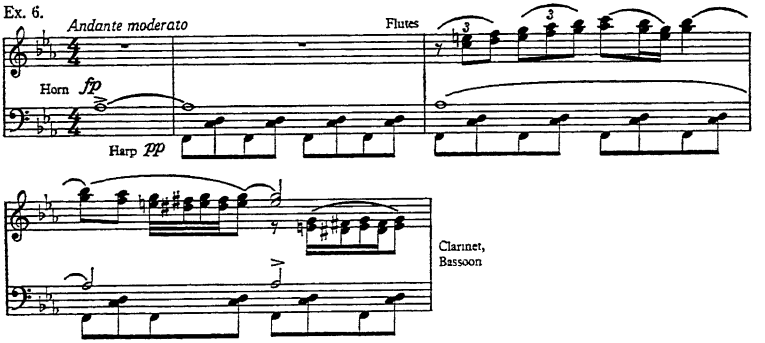
Tormentilla's relations with her father are now so strained that parting is inevitable. The two girls look forward to exchanging the solitudes of the forest for the metropolitan life of Golden Town. Angelica is prepared to finance their exile by taking with her the philosopher's stone from the dining-room mantelpiece, which she has had to dust morning by morning—this detail comes from Garnett. She rubs it and straightway summons milliners and messengers with all such requisites for travel as are to be found in Fortnum and Mason's shop. These milliners and messengers fill up

the stage for the final scene in which Dipsacus pronounces an order of banishment upon them in a resounding spell, which is taken up by all and brings down the curtain.

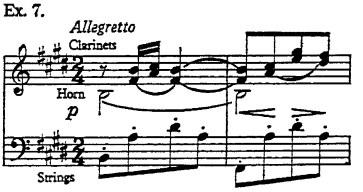
Act II

The second act takes us to Tormentilla's lodgings in Golden Town, which is according to the stage directions either an Eastern or a Cubist city. It is sunset, and there is a short orchestral introduction in keeping with the sensuous bewitchment of the time and place:

Ex. 6.



This music reappears later in the act when Amaryllus, drawn by the spells of Hob, Gob, and Lob, approaches Tormentilla's dwelling. But at the moment the mood is not pursued. On the contrary we have a Flower Girls' chorus, which inevitably seems like a sly allusion to the Flower Maidens in *Parsifal*, the Bridesmaids in *Der Freischütz*, and more faintly the Bridesmaids in *Ruddigore*. It is in fact, however, a parody of musical comedy, and a footnote in the score directs that the scene be played in an exaggeration of that style which it defines as 'with perfunctory charm'. The music begins

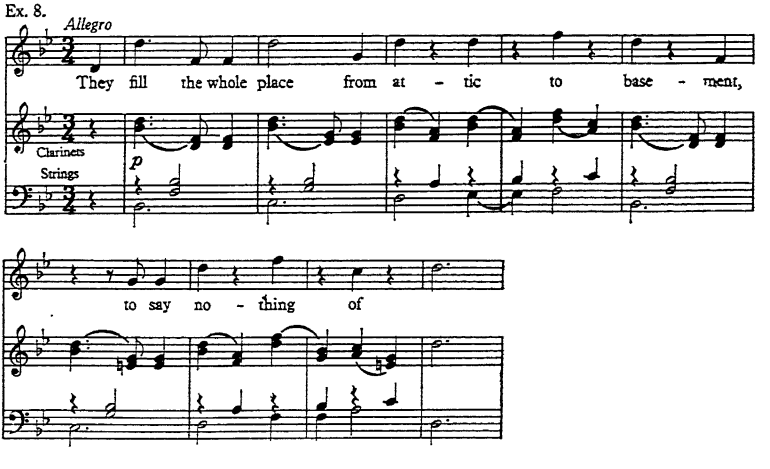
Ex. 7.

but changes to a luscious D flat major for the entry of the voices, which sing

> Here we come, our hands full laden,
> Bringing gifts to charm a maiden.

and then adding in an aside for the sake of the bathos

> (Not for fun, if she but knew it,
> Only 'cause we're paid to do it.)

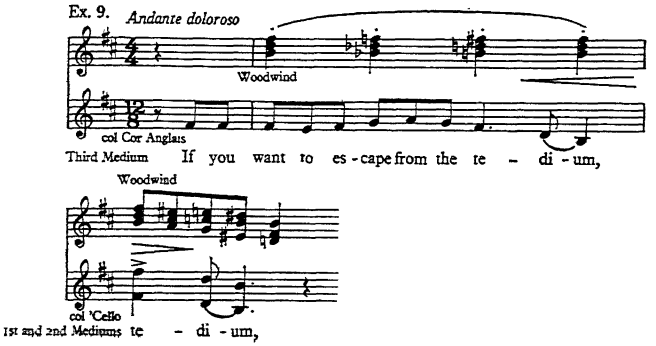
This number leads straight into a waltz song for Angelica and chorus. The waltz is ingeniously constructed with alternations of phrases that vary in length—the first two are respectively of six and five bars—while inside the phrases groups of two crotchets set up a cross-rhythm across the bar-line, or alternatively there is a snatch of tune in ordinary *lum-tum-tum* waltz rhythm. And there is syncopation—both the ordinary sort and the jazz kind in which the accent falls on the subdivisions of a beat. Only an extended example could show the use of all these devices but a few bars will indicate some of them:

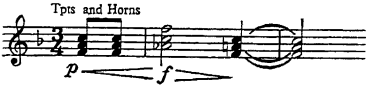
Ex. 8.

Note how beside the alternation of two-beat and three-beat rhythm the voice places its caesura a bar later than the accompaniment, where it occurs normally at exactly half-way through an ordinary eight-bar phrase. Actually that eight-bar phrase avoids a formal cadence yet contrives to modulate to D minor while

extending the sentence without a pause for another nine bars. The music glides along effortlessly, but it is full of rhythmic intricacies.

Here, then, is Tormentilla installed with Angelica in attendance to answer the bell to innumerable admirers who have been attracted by the fame of her beauty. But Hob, Gob, and Lob now appear in their usual compound time. Their purpose is to discover her whereabouts and to lure the young prince to her and get him poisoned by her kiss. They propose to disguise themselves as journalists to gain admission—this is the first piece of spoken dialogue in the act up to this point. They are, however, compelled to disappear by Gallanthus ringing the house-bell and Angelica opening the door to him. Gallanthus is the bearer of a bouquet from his master. The dialogue of these two, in which the latest developments of the plot appear and their own love-affair is carried forward, is interrupted by a lively little duet between them, in which the time oscillates between 6/8 and 2/4 and the repartee comes pat without a quaver's breathing space.

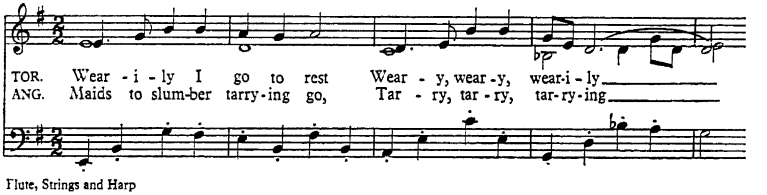
A new turn is given to the situation by the appearance of the Mediums bearing a box of poisoned chocolates from the Empress, who has divined from her crystal gazing that Tormentilla's beauty may endanger her son. (Tormentilla's own comment on this possibility when jealousy is ascribed by Angelica to Persicaria is 'Really, Angelica, the Oedipus complex doesn't amuse me, even in an Empress'.) This is the first appearance of what one may call the opposition—half-way through the second act. So they have a very distinctive trio specially coloured by the substitution of the cor anglais for the oboe; Ex. 9 gives its characteristic flavour:

Ex. 9. *Andante doloroso*

Their message and their gift delivered, the Mediums depart. They are not quite sure whether 'to go by the door or just evanesce'. Their place is taken by Hob, Gob, and Lob disguised respectively as a cricketer, a boxer, and a convict. The author's satire on the gutter press somehow misses fire; perhaps dog should not eat dog nor journalists guy their own calling. At the end of their trio the time is ripe for the appearance of Tormentilla, who is called on by a fanfare containing a false relation very typical of the composer's idiom

Ex. 10.

and by the singing of the chorus off stage—the first piece of choral music in the act.

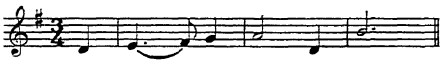
Tormentilla has two songs, both of them wistful in character like her song 'Oh, who would be unhappy me?' in Act I. The second song 'There was a time' leads on into a duet that is a nocturne-cum-lullaby in the usual three verses, which may be compared with the Snake lullaby in the first act.

Ex. 11.

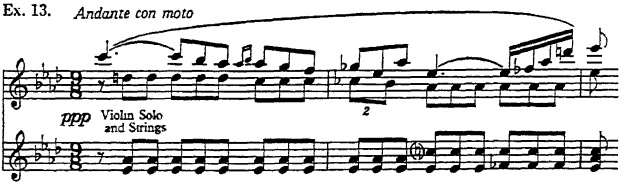


Tormentilla goes off to bed and Angelica puts out the lights. Ex. 6 is now heard again and is followed by Ex. 13 below (differently scored). Amaryllus enters guided by the mysterious voice engineered by Hob, Gob, and Lob. Voices that fill the enchanted air rouse Angelica, who comes out on to the gallery with a lantern in her hand, and we have an ensemble between her, the Prince, and the Hobgoblins, the sort of thing that happens in the fourth act of *Figaro* in which people talk at cross purposes in the dark. The Hobgoblins are confident that the poisoned kiss is on the point of destroying Amaryllus. Not, however, before he has unburdened

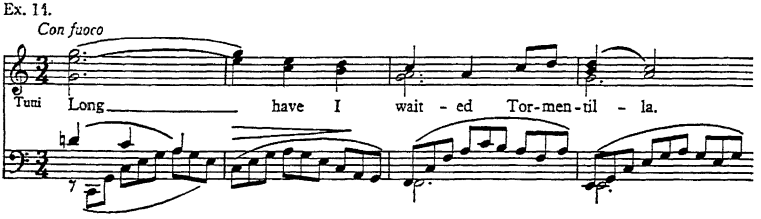
his heart of a heavenly serenade. This lovely melody begins to raise the temperature from comedy to pure romance, though actually it is in simple song form. But not in the simple ternary form that goes by that name in text-books, for Vaughan Williams's song-melodies, although derived ultimately from English folk-song, do not follow simple formulae but rather grow organically out of their first phrase. This particular song happens, however, to be unified by a recurring though varied phrase:

Ex. 12.

For the third verse there is a momentary change of key to a more intense E major in which the tune is played by the orchestra while the voice sings a counterpoint to it. The song leads straight into a duet. At the moment when passion is rising to its climax Tormentilla remembers that she must on no account kiss her lover, not because she knows who he is—she still believes he is the simple goatherd he mendaciously declared himself to be at their first meeting—but because her integrity will not allow her to hurt any honest man. So the music breaks off, and when it sounds again it is the enchantment music that we hear:

Ex. 13. *Andante con moto*



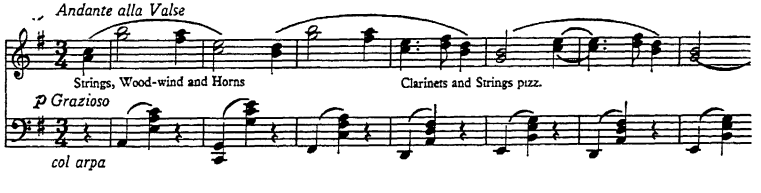
This, with voices singing in the background, is more than the lovers can resist, and they launch on a great love duet which reminds one of 'See the chariot at hand' in *Sir John in Love*:

Ex. 14.

He kisses her and the Hobgoblins shout "'Tis done, the deed is done'. Tormentilla starts up with a scream as she realizes what it is that has been done. She flings herself on her knees beside Amaryllus, who gradually becomes unconscious, only rousing, as characters in operas always do, to sing as his farewell a snatch from his serenade. The curtain comes down on the senseless lovers with the Hobgoblins hovering round like birds of ill omen and only Angelica and Gallanthus to lament 'Too late, too late it is their fate'. And from far off comes the sound of voices behind the scenes pianissimo but insistent

The poison kiss has been their doom.

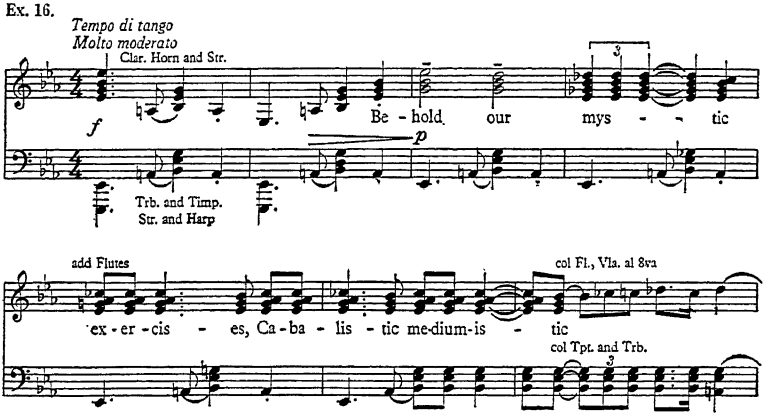
Act III

The third act begins with a waltz, which is immediately followed by a vocal tango for the three Mediums. The Finale is in hornpipe rhythm, the sextet in which the Hobgoblins and Mediums decide to commit the (by then) prevailing practice of matrimony is in 'tempo di valse', and the introductory orchestral waltz is repeated for a colloquy between the Empress and her Mediums. So that the last act, in which the plot has its tangles straightened out, becomes positively giddy with dance tunes. The waltz which is associated with the Empress Persicaria, to whose boudoir, studio, laboratory, or whatever the chamber is called in which magic is practised, the action of the play is now transferred, is simpler and rhythmically more straightforward than Angelica's waltz in the previous act (Ex. 8):

Ex. 15.

though it may be noted that the bar rhythms run not 4, 8, 16, 24, but 3, 6, 10, 21.

The Mediums are discovered at the domestic duties to which their mistress turns them on when they are not engaged in crystal-gazing or otherwise seeking *rapport* with the unknowable. Their tango must be indicated:

Ex. 16.



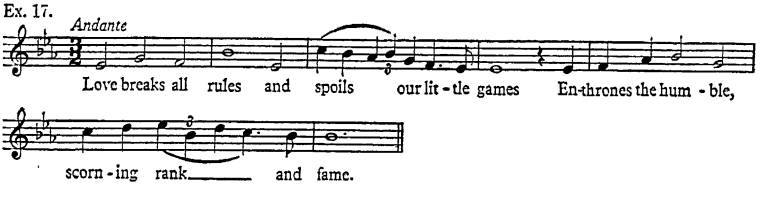
After this they discuss the news in dialogue until the Empress sweeps on to the stage driving before her a little old physician, who tries to tell her that her son, in spite of the traces of every known poison on him, has completely resisted their effects but is suffering from cardiac affection, or in other words love sickness for Tormentilla. The Empress is distracted and looks to her crystal for help. But she does not like what she sees in it and her first song, in which she is echoed by the Mediums, shows her rampaging in chromatics and a brisk duple rhythm. What she has seen in her crystal is the figure of Dipsacus, 'the man I parted from twenty years ago'. A musical colloquy follows in which Dipsacus and his crew acclaim their day of vengeance while the Empress makes disparaging remarks. To her Mediums after the dark vision has vanished the Empress recounts her former association with Dipsacus and waxes so sentimental in doing so that she falls into a ballad on the subject 'When I was young'. This shows quite a different side of her character and prepares the way for the much more sentimental duet which she presently sings with Dipsacus (see Ex. 19 below). The scene is rounded off by the waltz (Ex. 15)

in which the Empress dismisses her Mediums for the moment. They therefore 'evanesce', their favourite way of making an exit. The next scene consists of spoken dialogue in which the business of getting the Empress and Tormentilla together is managed by the intervention of Gallanthus and Angelica, who is summoned by the Empress and comes up suddenly through the floor powdering her nose. Tormentilla is similarly summoned by the Empress and their wrangle is concluded with the honours to Tormentilla:

Empress. You are a very astute and objectionable young woman.
Tor. (*cheerfully*). Oh, no—only a young woman who is fighting for her love.
Emp. You love my son? You loved him when you thought him a goatherd?
Tor. To distraction.
Emp. (*hopefully*). Enough to give him up?
Tor. Enough to *refuse* to give him up.
Emp. But if it's for his happiness?
Tor. That is rank, old-fashioned sentiment and you know it.

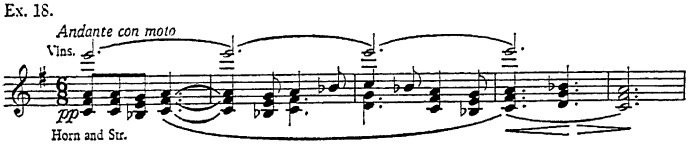
So the Empress surrenders in a splendid song 'Love breaks all rules':

Ex. 17.



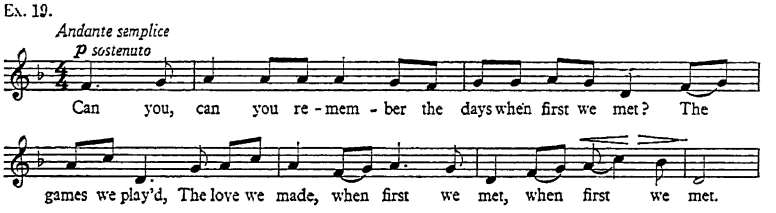
a tune at once imperial and romantic—not sentimental just now. She has not yet finished, however. She invokes the presence of Dipsacus in a vigorous aria supported by the hidden chorus of forest creatures; in itself it is not particularly interesting music, but it fits the situation and there is an optional chorus available for Dipsacus's Hobgoblins when it is desired to make the chorus a feature of the production. Dipsacus appears with the remark, 'You did that rather well, Persicaria, considering it's twenty years since I taught you that invocation.' Dipsacus and Persicaria now fence for victory over each other, but it begins to appear that the forces

behind their rival magics are love and hate and the Empress has already learned that love is the stronger. However, Dipsacus has to be convinced that Amaryllus is not dead for all the poisonous power of the kiss, so the Empress conjures a vision of the lovers gazing into each other's eyes. When it is first heard their love music has still the distortion of magic in its augmented intervals:

Ex. 18.

but presently it changes to honest triads honestly in G major, and then it tears at one's heart strings. Is there no limit to the emotional power of the common chord? It hardly seems necessary to invent a twelve-note scale and a dodecaphonic chord when anything so fresh and lovely can be extracted by triads moving serenely in parallel motion.

Dipsacus realizes that he is beaten. 'Cheer up,' says the Empress, 'we are both beaten—by Youth', and she reveals that she had taken the precautionary measure of feeding her son on antidotes. Talk of the younger generation inclines their elders to sentimental reminiscence. So they indulge in an orgy of it in a duet. 'Sentimental' is usually in music a synonym for falsity or excess or other noxious quality. Will Vaughan Williams therefore give us a really bad sentimental tune? He does—and he does not. Here is a pedestrian melody:

Ex. 19.



Its sentimental features, the reiterated A and the drop to the D, are exaggerated. But it is no ordinary vulgar tune: its phrase length is

six bars not eight, its key is ambiguous, F major inclining to D minor with an excursion to D major in the middle. Note, too, how the component phrases are of different lengths and stresses, quite unlike the regular formations of the banal ballads which the tune is aping, rhythmic variations, these, quite beyond the capacity of the sentimental composer to achieve.

Another duet follows in which the betrothal of Angelica and Gallanthus is brought about to a rather jaunty tune, then a quartet of the patter type in which the other two couples, parents and children, discuss love and housekeeping. Two, four, and now six, for the Hobgoblins and Mediums pair off in a sextet. They declare themselves tired of the magic business and propose to retire on their savings. 'From public life we evanesce.' This is the cue for the Finale, a hornpipe à la Purcell in which all the principals and chorus chant their prothalamion:

> Cakes are baking,
> Frocks are making,
> Cooks and modistes all are slaving.

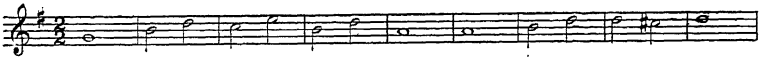
So the opera ends with increasing animation and the asseveration that Love has conquered.

The Pilgrim's Progress

What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. And that is the view mostly taken by composers who have created a jungle of musical nomenclature by their reckless disregard for the niceties of terminology of their art. But Vaughan Williams is more particular and errs in the other direction in that he denies the designation ballet to *Job* and opera to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Both are works for the musical stage: *Job* is in fact a ballet though not, it is true, of the conventional kind, and *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an opera in so far as it involves characters singing in the first person in a scenic setting, though admittedly it is not conventionally dramatic. So we read on the title-page that it is a 'Morality

in a prologue, four acts and an epilogue founded on Bunyan's allegory of the same name'.

The morality plays of the later Middle Ages, of which *Everyman* may be taken as the type, had allegorical texts and their characters were abstractions personified, bearing fabricated names like Good Deeds in *Everyman*. Bunyan's allegory is 'in the similitude of a dream', recounted partly in narrative and partly in dialogue, and from its nature is episodic. Nine episodes from the book are made into scenes which are more of the nature of tableaux than of dramatic action. The dream is shown in Prologue and Epilogue. When the curtain goes up Bunyan is revealed sitting in Bedford Gaol writing the last words of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 'So I awoke and behold it was a dream'. Then he turns back to the beginning and reads the opening words. As he does so the Pilgrim enters backstage and while he comes forward Bunyan is blacked out to leave the stage to Pilgrim. Bunyan is musically represented by the hymn-tune 'York', which is heard again in the Epilogue (cf. pp. 264–5).

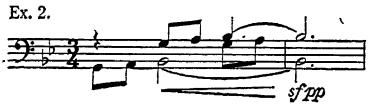
Ex. 1.

The opera or 'morality', brought to its final form when the composer was over seventy-five, is the culmination of a life-long preoccupation with *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The Tallis Fantasia of 1909 shows the first crystallization of the idiom which Vaughan Williams was to use for religious themes, and Bunyan as well as Tallis had a hand in the making of it, for already the theme had been associated with Bunyan in some incidental music to a church pageant, and the hymn 'Who would true valour see' was included in *The English Hymnal* of 1906 with a tune 'adapted from a traditional English melody' by the editor (i.e. Vaughan Williams). In 1922 came the pastoral episode *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*, which was staged at the Royal College of Music but was also sung as an oratorio at a Hereford Festival; it is now incorporated bodily into the fourth act of the opera. Twenty years later the Fifth Symphony contained two direct references to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The original manuscript declared what the

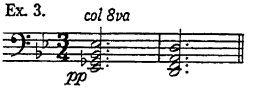
printed score has suppressed—that some of the themes were taken from the then unfinished opera, and the third movement bore the superscription beginning 'Upon this place stood a cross and a little below a sepulchre' (see p. 48).

The twentieth-century composer thus finds some basic affinity with the seventeenth-century writer, unlike Robert Bridges, who believing that moral and artistic excellence are but the two faces of the same coin rejects the claims of *The Pilgrim's Progress* to satisfy artistic canons at all: Bunyan's crude technique is the counterpart of his detestable Calvinism. The Pilgrim who deserts his own family to save his own soul is no better than a cad in Bridges's view (which does not accord with that of Jesus Christ in the Gospels). But it would seem that for Vaughan Williams, as for thousands of readers, the book with the idea of a pilgrimage from this world to that which is to come as its core has sufficient art, provided the allegory is not pressed too hard, to become coextensive with life itself. All allegories creak here and there and all fall short of an exact parallelism. Bridges's verdict, delivered in his own reformed spelling, is that 'The languag of life seems tu have been translated intu a dialect bi Bunyan and tu need retranslation before it can have any meening for us'. Certainly Vaughan Williams has done the retranslation, and it may be that with him, as for the countless simple folk who still read and keep Bunyan's allegory alive, its plain prose is a literary equivalent of the English folk-song which has been his musical bible.

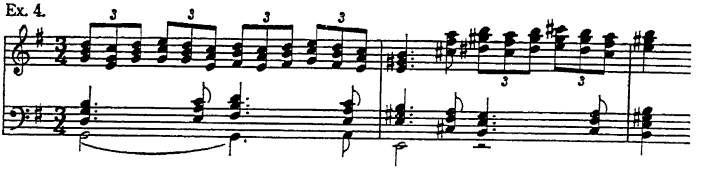
The first act contains two scenes beside the Prologue and an Intermezzo which links it to the second act. In the first scene Pilgrim meets Evangelist. The Pilgrim's key is G, minor when he is aware of his burden of sin, major when he is filled with resolution to go forth; the Evangelist's is E flat minor when he is solemnly adjuring Pilgrim, E major when he brings the Celestial City before Pilgrim's eyes. The thematic characterization is equally direct and unambiguous.

Pilgrim's anxiety is

Ex. 2.

Evangelist's stern comfort is

Ex. 3.

subsequently varied with the E flat chord containing a second instead of a third and so requiring further progression of resolution.

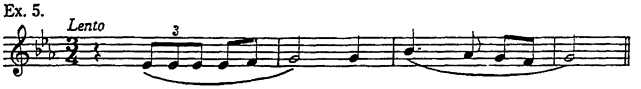
Pilgrim's resolve contains two elements, which can be seen in combination in Ex. 4.

Ex. 4.

The light of the Heavenly City is depicted in the same kind of triadic harmony but in E major. There is one further representative theme: the four neighbours, Pliable and Obstinate, Mistrust and Timorous, have descending and tremolo chromatic chords over a markedly iambic bass. The connecting music to Scene II, which covers the change of scene, is agitated, depicting Pilgrim's struggles to reach the House Beautiful. We hear nothing of his encounter with Mr. Worldly Wiseman or of Help who extricated him from the Slough of Despond. It will be observed that the composer has telescoped the meetings with Pliable and Obstinate and with Mistrust and Timorous.

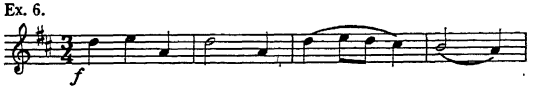
The musical purpose of the second scene is to establish the choral nature of the opera and reaffirm its visionary character even at the expense of the dramatic. The place at which Pilgrim has arrived with much toil from the weight of his burden was the ascending ground where 'stood a cross and a little below in the bottom a sepulchre'. In Bunyan his burden rolls off and falls downhill into the sepulchre, but in the opera it is removed by the Three Shining Ones, who with the Interpreter and the Men and Women of the House Beautiful carry on a choral colloquy with Pilgrim.

Here at the beginning is the reference to the Fifth Symphony,

from the third movement of which the opening chords and cor anglais tune are borrowed (in a transposed version).

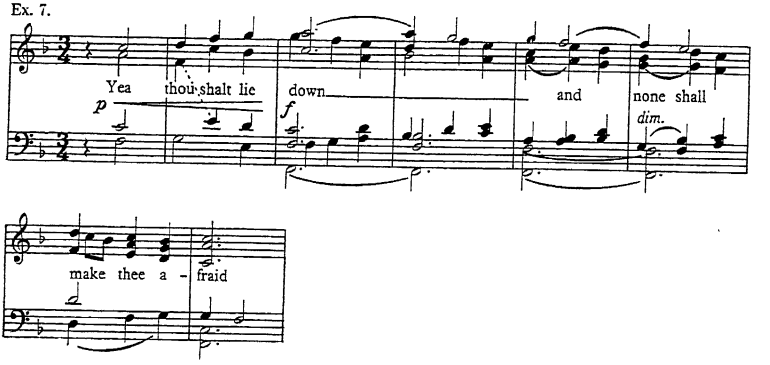
Ex. 5.

Pilgrim stumbles to the foot of the Cross and Ex. 2, symbolical of his anguish, is mingled with the horn chords of the animato section (p. 79 of the score of the symphony), as the Pilgrim cries out to be saved. Singing is heard off stage as the Three Shining Ones chant in a unison that breaks down into three-part harmony 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord'. When Pilgrim replies he does so in the words originally quoted in the Fifth Symphony, 'He hath given me rest by his sorrow and life by his death', to the accompaniment of the complete cor anglais tune which is the first subject of the Romanza movement. Bunyan says that Christian was 'glad and lightsome when he said this with a merry heart' but Vaughan Williams maintains a mood of rapt solemnity.

The opening sequence of four chords, of Ex. 21 in the Fifth Symphony, extended here as there to six, is repeated while the Shining Ones, now present on the stage, pronounce their greeting. Then for the introduction of the Interpreter the key goes to A major and arpeggios begin to flow beneath the chords. When the Interpreter speaks we hear, in G, the music of the pilgrimage of which Ex. 4 is an epitome, and a chorus grows out of it in which triplets are wreathed over homophonic choral writing a little (but not much) like that of the *Sanctus* in the B minor Mass. The dialogue between Pilgrim and Interpreter is carried on in diatonic conjunct melody over an accompaniment which is drawn from the same stock of ideas as provided the theme of the Passacaglia in the Fifth Symphony (cf. Ex. 30, p. 51). Underneath, D is sustained as a pedal point. The blessing of Pilgrim is with a chorale-like tune:

Ex. 6.

sung first by Interpreter and taken up by the Three Shining Ones and then by the chorus. The writing is still in flowing diatonic

lines, which cross and are descanted by the orchestra into a harmonic texture which looks, and sounds, like this:

Ex. 7.



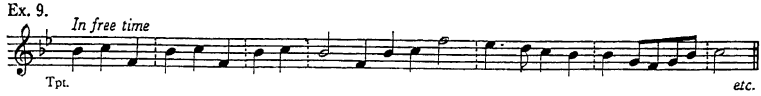
When Acts I and II are performed without a break a Nocturne is played and sung as an intermezzo. This was an afterthought composed during rehearsals but proved to be one of the most moving episodes in the opera. Watchful the Porter comes downstage, the curtain falls behind him and after some preliminary arioso he sings Psalm cxxi to the accompaniment of a recurrent phrase:

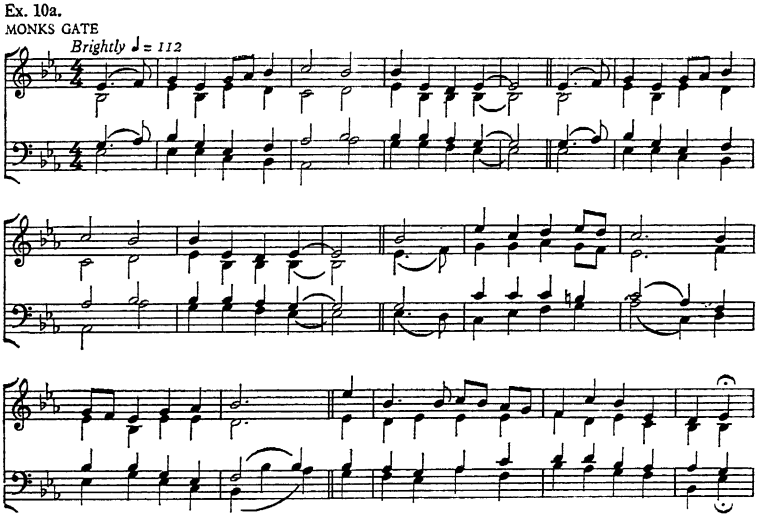
Ex. 8.

The vocal line is again diatonic and conjunct but saved from squareness by the rhythm which introduces triplets among its even crotchets. Counterpoints to Ex. 8 are generated as the music proceeds, and Ex. 8, in whole or in part or in suggestion, appears frequently in imitation. There is a certain amount, with many optional abbreviations indicated, of music available to cover the requirements of scene-changing. The last stage direction is 'The stage lights up gradually behind the curtain'.

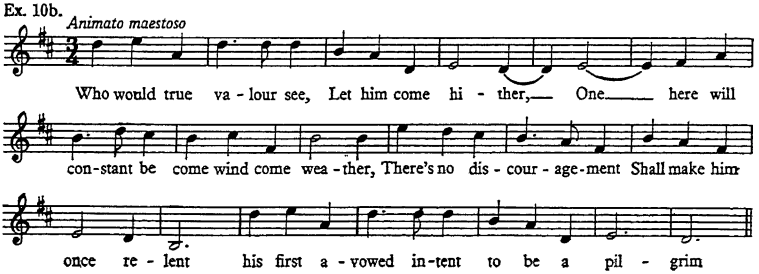
The second act is in two scenes, the arming of Pilgrim and his fight with Apollyon. A trumpeter, a herald, and a scribe occupy the centre of the stage with the chorus ranged on either side. The scene depicts an open road: on the right of it is the Armoury. The chief musical feature of the first scene is the setting of Bunyan's

great hymn 'Who would true valour see' which comes in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the dialogue between Mr. Great-Heart and Mr. Valiant-for-Truth. The trumpeter's fanfare foreshadows the shape of the tune

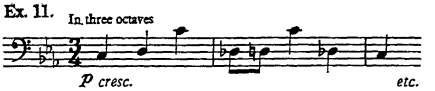
Ex. 9.

Vaughan Williams had years before, when editing *The English Hymnal*, provided a tune for this hymn. This is the now well-known tune 'Monks Gate', an adaptation of the English traditional melody 'Our Captain Calls' collected by Vaughan Williams from a singer of Monk's Gate near Horsham in 1904.

Ex. 10a.

The new tune is original:

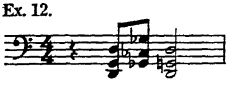
Ex. 10b.



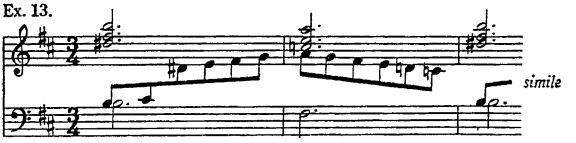
Between the second and the third verses of the hymn the arming of Pilgrim takes place. During the singing of the hobgoblin-foul-fiend verse, which has an instrumental descant of running triplet quavers, Pilgrim draws his sword and walks through the lines of the chorus as if to start up the Pilgrim's road. A stage trumpeter heralds him forth on his way. In the entracte is heard the approach of an evil force, depicted, as in *Job* and elsewhere, by chromatic semitones and leaps of a seventh.

Ex. 11.

This, the foul fiend, and Pilgrim's hymn Ex. 10 now contend by alternating and coinciding and finally broadening out and leading into Scene II, the fight with Apollyon.

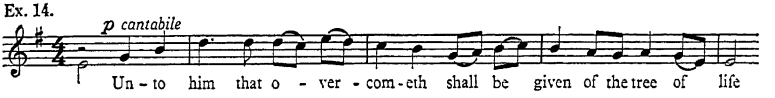
A Chorus of Doleful Creatures shout wordlessly on a dissonant chord in the Valley of Humiliation. Chromatic semitones and leaps of a seventh are in evidence. Apollyon challenges Pilgrim, singing like Fafner through a megaphone, and Pilgrim answers him back; the Doleful Creatures moan in false relations. Apollyon stamps about in chords based on

Ex. 12.

The staging of this scene presents difficulties because anything representational suggests Lewis Carroll's 'slithy toves'. Yet there must be something sufficiently formidable to make credible the contest between Christian and Apollyon, in which each forces the other down. At the end Pilgrim is shown standing over Apollyon with his sword at his heart. The lighting changes, fading out Apollyon and fully illuminating Christian, while the hymn-melody Ex. 10b is heard for the last time, interrupted by the slithy toves semitones as the Doleful Creatures make off. Alternative stage directions are provided by the composer, as an Appendix to Act II, in which however the page references are wrongly

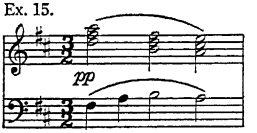
numbered. Christian grows weak because of his wounds. To him appears a Heavenly Being bearing a branch of the Tree of Life with a new theme of great simplicity:

Ex. 13.

The Branch Bearer himself has a melody in two repeated phrases, of which the first is

Ex. 14.



These two themes Exx. 13 and 14 in alternation and combination lead to the final episode of the act in which the Evangelist, over an accompaniment of swaying triads (F major first inversion and D minor root position), adjures Pilgrim to be faithful unto death over an ostinato figure and triadic harmony, and gives him the Key of Promise:

Ex. 15.

This is D major, the key of the Pilgrim's hymn, but it is a D major which, though it by no means avoids the tonic, contrives to keep itself somehow floating in the air: it ends on a chord of D major not in root position but in its second inversion.

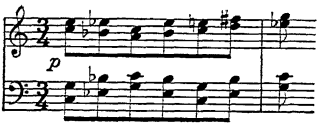
The third act opens with Vanity Fair and ends with Pilgrim in prison.

The scene is set with booths on the stage and chromatic semitones in the orchestra. To the crowd of Bunyan's allegorical personifications who jostle with the stock Biblical villains, Judas Iscariot, Demas (who deserted St. Paul), Simon Magus, and Pontius Pilate, Ursula Wood has added the character of Lord

Lechery, who is a buffo tenor and has a considerable solo in praise of wealth and women.

> Come buy from our booths all the pleasures of man;
> Nothing endures so choose while you can.
> What is value but money? What's life but estate?
> Who wanders alone leaves pleasure too late.
> Here is all that earth offers, and all to be sold,
> For the power and the glory are servants to gold.
>
> Come and look on our merchandise, dark girl or fair,
> Soft limbs and sweet bosoms with beauties to share.
> Or will you have Hylas to lull you to sleep?
> The pleasures of love are subtle and deep.

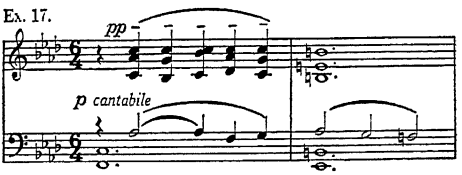
Before, during, and after this song the chorus of traders keeps up shouts of 'Buy, what will ye buy?' in consecutive fifths and octaves moving in the chromatic semitones which are the symbol of evil. Even the images of sensuality, though set in the rich key of F sharp major, are heartless music, for the third of the scale is contradicted, flattened, used in false relation and chromatic slither. While all the racket of the fair is going on Pilgrim enters, turns his back on the crowd and sings 'Turn mine eyes lest they behold vanity', to which the crowd shriek the retort, 'Vanity, vanity, all is vanity'. A procession headed by a jester brings Demas and Judas upon the scene, followed by Mesdames Babble and Wanton, who produce a slight change in the rhythm of the music. Their episode is marked 'andante alla tedesca' and is founded on the juxtaposition of C major and E flat, of which Ex. 16 is a typical bar.

Ex. 16.

Pilgrim's only response to the invitation to buy the merchandise offered to him is to ask to buy the truth, which allows Pontius Pilate to sing parlando or actually to speak his famous aphorism,

'What is truth?' Choral uproar breaks out at Pilgrim's reference to Beelzebub as the father of lies. Pilgrim is now in full spate of denunciation, when trumpet fanfares announce the approach of Lord Hate-Good, the legal luminary, before whom Pilgrim is haled and by whom he is condemned to imprisonment. The crowd drags him off shouting for the death penalty.

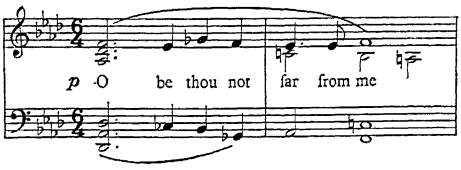
The music of all these episodes is harsh, angular in rhythm, full of raw open fifths, using false relation as symbol of that incoherence and disharmony which is evil (cf. the similar treatment of Satan in *Job*, see p. 305). As music it is of no special interest except that it is very much in Vaughan Williams's own idiom. But from the point of view of the dramatic plan of the opera the scene is of the greatest importance, since it provides the place for spectacle, movement, and a major clash—here is action, conflict of one against many, drama rather than tableau, stout deeds to balance the reflective faith of the earlier scenes and of the return to quietude in the next scene.

The second scene of the third act shows the interior of a prison with large gates and darkness beyond. The music opens in F minor, the chords contain within them a moving part like a fragment of plainchant, the motion is smooth and the mood subdued, but the semitone drop of chords in root position indicates that evil is still triumphant. The time signature is 6/4, but bars of 3/2 intervene without notice or apology. The two opening bars do in fact illustrate the state of affairs—Pilgrim's immobilization, his prayer, the persistence of evil.

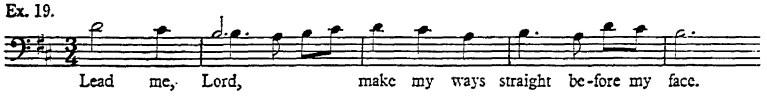
Ex. 17.

The immobility is in the reiterated unmoving C's, the prayer in the moving minor parts which are marked cantabile, and evil in the consecutive open fifths oscillating by a chromatic semitone.

The whole scene is an immense monologue for Pilgrim, beginning with a melody evocative of a supplicatory plainchant—two bars with their accompanying harmony serve to epitomize it.

Ex. 18.



Suddenly, bethinking himself of the key which he carries on him Pilgrim breaks into recitative, 'O fool that I am', and with a snatch of trumpet fanfare and a phrase from a tune of the same stock as the hymn to valour he puts the key into the lock and the gates fly open. Whereupon Pilgrim breaks into an arioso in which he sings paraphrases of psalms first against swaying triads, then over sweeping harp arpeggios, then against an elaborate accompaniment of counterpoints in cross-rhythms, and finally against tremolando strings (the audible counterpart to the visible moonlight of the stage), beneath which voice and instrumental bass have this sturdy tune in unison:

Ex. 19.

The scene ends with Pilgrim walking along the Pilgrim's Way while the orchestra plays its counterpoint of chords in imitation and contrary motion in a very firm D major.

This scene is an elaboration of a paragraph in *The Pilgrim's Progress* that follows Faithful's martyrdom. Faithful, who in the book seemed to be the cause of fiercer resentment among the inhabitants of the town of Vanity, does not appear in the opera. Bunyan wrote, after describing Vanity Fair and the trial of the two Christians by Lord Hate-Good and a jury of no less significantly named citizens, 'Thus came Faithful to his end. . . . But as for Christian, he had some respite, and was remanded back to prison.

So he there remained for a space; but he that overrules all things, having the power of their rage in his own hand, so wrought it about, that Christian for that time escaped them and went his way.' The episode of finding the key and opening the gates is transferred from the dungeon of Doubting Castle.

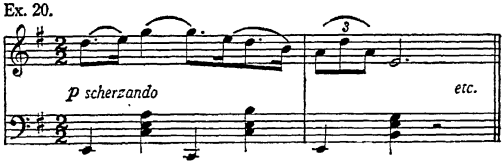
The fourth act deals with the amusing encounter with Mister By-Ends, with the episode on the Delectable Mountains and the end of the journey to the Celestial City. After all the trumpets (and indeed the bells and the voices) have sounded for Pilgrim on the other side, John Bunyan takes the stage again and in an epilogue offers his book as if to the audience.

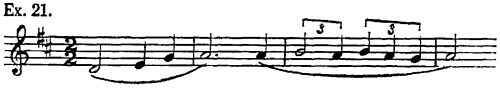
The act opens with a short prelude in which beneath slowly swaying triads a variant of Ex. 9, the motto of courageous pilgrimage, is heard. The passage, which recurs, signifies the coming into sight of journey's end. But what happens first is Pilgrim's encounter with a woodcutter's boy, singing as he works at his faggots. This episode comes from Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, where the character is actually a shepherd boy, who sings a little hymn in three stanzas, of which the first is:

He that is down needs fear no fall,
He that is low no pride,
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

Mr. Great-Heart and Christian's family encounter him near the Valley of Humiliation. In the opera however it is Pilgrim who encounters him and appropriates the words of the guide, 'Hark to what that boy doth sing. I will dare to say he leads a merrier life and wears more of the herb called heart's-ease in his bosom than he that is clad in silk and velvet.' Pilgrim then asks if the Celestial City is far off, and the boy replies to the music of the introduction that you can see the Delectable Mountains on a clear day and then you know you are not far from your destination. The boy, in his innocence and anxiety to be helpful, spies the approach of one 'who would gladly share your pilgrimage'. It is Mister By-Ends with his wife on his arm. The composer characterizes

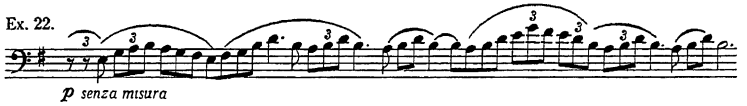
this amiable, wordly, worthless couple in a jaunty bit of deliberate banality:

Ex. 20.

This tune persists through the whole interview but is made more vulgar by being tricked out in thirds as the even more despicable Madam By-Ends intervenes in the conversation. The texture is thinned momentarily for Mister By-Ends's immortal remark about his father who 'was a water-man looking one way and rowing another' and then warms up again with decorative sextuplets in thirds. The interview however soon closes and the episode is over. The boy bids him god-speed to one more version of the pervasive protean idea out of which the fanfare and the hymn (Exx. 9 and 10b) are made:

Ex. 21.

The key changes from the resolute D major of the journey to a bright B major for the vision of the Celestial City, and the texture is enriched with massive chords and bell-like swaying triplets. As Pilgrim departs, the boy sings the last verse of his hymn to a pastoral pipe accompaniment. A cadenza leads to an entracte, which is compounded of a 6/8 version of the hymn-tune and a recall of Ex. 21. Now follows the Pastoral Episode of 1922, slightly altered in a few small details and shorn of its last few pages of harp, bells, and Alleluias, which have been changed and transferred to the third and last scene of the act. The division between the scenes is marked by the darkening of the stage.

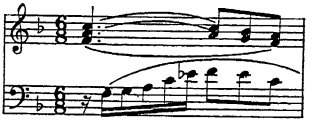
The Pastoral Episode grows thematically out of a piece of free cantilena on the lower strings, a device often employed by the

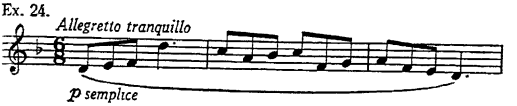
composer, of which a conspicuous instance is the beginning of the Fantasia on Christmas Carols. This cantilena is in a gapped (hexatonic) Dorian mode, is played by the viola senza misura, and contains alternations of duplets and triplets to give it flexibility:

Ex. 22.

The Shepherds, whose names, Knowledge, Experience, and Watchful, are jettisoned by the composer so as not to make the fresh morning air heavy with allegory, are specified as young, middle-aged, and old. They are found singing, as they kneel at sunset within sight of the Celestial City, some verses of Psalm xci. In the original form this was a solo for the First Shepherd, but it is now divided between the three and concludes with them singing, tenor, baritone and bass, in unison. A variant of Ex. 22, played now on the cello but followed by the other strings in imitation, is heard as they rise from their knees to greet the Pilgrim. A dialogue straight from Bunyan about the ownership and nature of the Delectable Mountains and about Pilgrim's wayfaring follows, all the music being thematically derived from Ex. 22.

But the events as related in Bunyan's book are not followed. There is no sight-seeing, no meeting with Hopeful, but there is a declamation by Pilgrim in a new, resolute section in 3/4 time and an encouragement from the Shepherds to him to appear before the presence of God. The invitation to be solaced by the good of the Delectable Mountains is accepted and the next section depicts what that good is. The music now takes on the chaste sensuousness touched with incidental astringencies, such as we find in *Flos Campi*. In purling triplet chords on the strings and a flute obbligato the First Shepherd commends the beauties of the place. 'Here the air is very sweet and pleasant, here you shall hear continually the singing of birds and shall see every day flowers appear in the land.' The bird song that Pilgrim hears is in fact a setting of

Psalm xxiii for a soprano voice. The psalm and the continuing dialogue go on over a new accompanimental figure of a pastoral character:

Ex. 23.

This considerable section, lyrical, sensuous, charming, has the peculiar fresh beauty of those three qualities when they are emptied of all erotic content of meaning. Even so Pilgrim is summoned in recitative and arioso by a Celestial Messenger to leave these delights and prepare to stand before the presence of the Master that very day. The Shepherds see him on his way and there is pastoral simplicity in the music founded on

Ex. 24.

which recurs in F minor.

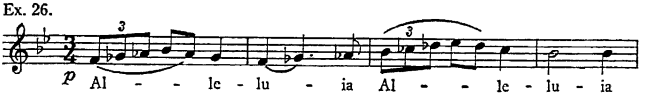
Pilgrim approaches the River of Death, and now occurs the one considerable alteration from the 1922 to the 1951 edition. Instead of a held chord to support Pilgrim's cry 'I sink in the deep waters' a new agitated accompaniment has been provided of tremolando strings and emphatic chordal progressions in the bass. The Shepherds come to his aid (in both versions) in academic, imitational counterpoint based on

Ex. 25.

a suitable vehicle, sanctified by centuries of use for supplications in the words of the Psalmist. This in the opera brings the scene to an end.

In the earlier version the final section is in E minor and consists of swaying Alleluias in triplets with harps and bells pealing. In the

new version the E natural remains in the bass as a pedal point for the first choral Alleluias, on chords of B flat (the key signature contains two flats). A fanfare on the trumpet, like Ex. 9, heralds and accompanies these shouts from voices in the Celestial City and men and women on the bank of the river; a tenor solo from back-stage sings a triumphant descant, in which the passing E's are natural. The clashes of tonality, which produce great splendour of effect like the billowing of banners of different colours, are further sharpened by the antiphonal exchanges between two choirs singing (in unison)

Ex. 26.

thus throwing in the Phrygian mode against the major. This sequence of chords and intonations is repeated with distant alto and soprano soloists in turn chanting the apostrophe to the throne of God. A sharp key-change to a clear G major brings the front-stage choir to 'Holy, holy, holy' in block harmony, against which Ex. 26 is hurled as bells begin to clang. The alternation of clear diatonic block harmony with Ex. 26 is sustained with cumulative effect until the stage darkens and the sound dies away leaving only an echo of the fanfare.

For the Epilogue the figure of John Bunyan comes before the curtain, introduced by the bell-like theme of Ex. 1. He begins to sing the poem which Bunyan appended to his allegory in which he adjures the reader to interpret the dream aright. It is set in flowing diatonic four-part harmony in the manner of a hymn—cf. Ex. 7. There is no accidental to disturb the placid G major until two quick flashing plunges into a blazing E major. Back to G and the opera ends, as it began, with Ex. 1.

Vivisectional analysis, especially when it is driven to the cataloguing method inevitable in discussing an opera scene by scene, seems to leave a pile of dry bones where before there was a living organism. And indeed it is anatomical in purpose and method, designed to isolate for inspection the elements of the composer's

thought, so that when one returns to the living work of art the listener is aware not only of the unity and cohesion of the work as it appears to him in immediate perception from stage or score, but of the way it has been achieved by the operations of the composer's mind. Such an analysis, if successful, affords an insight into the mystery of the way by which imagination and intellect work together in the creation of a work of art.

The basic exercise of the imagination can be seen in its most primitive form in the twenty-six musical examples, which constitute the minimum needed to account for the musical substance of the opera. In them there appears little repetition, yet to one playing through the vocal score on the piano there comes the impression that the whole work has eventuated (that hideous word seems to be the right description of the process) from a small stock of closely related thematic (including of course harmonic and rhythmic as well as purely melodic) ideas. What Vaughan Williams does with a fanfare motif and kindred gapped scales can be seen by comparing for instance Exx. 6 and 9 with Exx. 10 and 20. From arpeggio or gapped scale to diatonic conjunct motifs is a short step: a comparison of Exx. 5, 7, 8, 14 (in which the two types of melodic structure are combined), and all the Delectable Mountains themes Exx. 22–26, shows how various and rich are the melodic possibilities of a few diatonic notes without any recourse to chromatics. Then again triadic harmony, as shown in Exx. 4, 15, and 23, is all-pervasive and expresses here as elsewhere the visionary ideal. The variation and combination of these musical images is the work of the intellect.

The reverse process from intellect to imagination, which are obverse and reverse of the cognitive faculty (as distinct from the sensuous and emotional faculties of our minds), would appear to have been involved in working on the text. To anyone who does not know Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* intimately and cannot say whether this or that episode occurs in Christian's or in Christiana's pilgrimage the opera appears to present the essence of the book, allowing of course for the elimination of the detailed theological arguments. The verbal text runs smoothly, the episodes seem self-contained and coherent, but in fact a vast amount of

synthesis has been done by the composer in compiling his own 'book'. He at any rate knows it backwards as well as forwards, and since he can be very drastic in the handling of poems and literary sources when setting words to music, the resulting libretto is the outcome of an imaginative effort working upon a stock of literary knowledge. Certainly, the opera-goer or the student of the score will be hard put to it to track to its source in Bunyan the various lines that go to make up each scene. Two gross examples have been cited in this analysis—the telescoping of the prison and Giant Despair's dungeon in Act III, Scene 2, and the amalgamation of material of the scenes on the Delectable Mountains in both parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, together with conflations of phrases and sentences from Bunyan and the Psalms.

The fact is that the long preoccupation with the subject, already described at the beginning of this note, involved both intellect and imagination in a two-way traffic at the deepest level. Wagner describes how his mind worked on this problem, concept, word, and tone being united in a joint operation that defies chronological priority for any element. The purpose of analysis is to show how the work of art has come into being. It is for criticism to pronounce how far it is successful.

Film Music

Two quotations:

The action of a film develops along entirely different lines from those of a sonata or symphony, or even of a rhapsody or of a symphonic poem. It is episodic in its nature and moves straight ahead without variation, working-out, or recapitulation. If the music is part of the action it is entirely realistic and if it is used as background it is ancillary and complementary. It is sometimes used to illustrate, but that is generally in a bad film. . . . Music is more frequently used to intensify, underline, accelerate, or aggrandize; to cause excitement, and to affect the sub-consciousness of the audience.

These are the words of Ernest Irving, musical director of the Ealing Studios, who therefore speaks with authority.[1]

[1] Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, LXXVI (1950).

There are two ways of viewing film music: one in which every action, wish, gesture or incident is punctuated in sound. This requires great skill and orchestral knowledge and a vivid specialized imagination but often leads to a mere scrappy succession of sounds of no musical value in itself . . . the other method . . . is to ignore the details and to intensify the spirit of the whole situation by a continuous stream of music.

This is Vaughan Williams himself speaking.[1]

Both musicians agree that mere point-by-point illustration is not much good, but both in the papers from which these citations are extracted allow that the speed of the action in films, the rapid changes of scene and sentiment, preclude much continuity and allow none of music's most characteristic method of producing its effect, namely repetition and development. The problem of reconciling the principle of continuous flow with the practical exigencies of cutting and editing a film is so severe that in the event very little music composed for the film studio survives the exhibition of the film. Vaughan Williams in the article which he contributed to the *R.C.M. Magazine* while he was still virtually a novice at film composition makes some suggestions for collaboration at an earlier stage between producers, photographers, and composers, but only claims that while things are as they are in film studios film music must be intrinsically good of its kind—hence the rejection of the purely illustrative sort of score. Even so the inevitable scrappiness of the completed film score ensures that such music will rarely achieve any independent life of its own; it will not be published, and as Hubert Foss says,[2] it can hardly be criticized without seeing the film concurrently with the hearing of its sound track. Vaughan Williams, though plunging into the (for him) new medium at the age of seventy, was sufficiently successful not only to be asked to write more film scores but to have two of them recorded and sold on gramophone disks. They are *The Loves of Joanna Godden* (1947) and *Scott of the Antarctic* (1949). One of them has been officially scrapped by the author, *49th Parallel*, though he

[1] *Royal College of Music Magazine*, January 1944; reprinted in *Beethoven's Choral Symphony and other Writings* (1953).

[2] *Ralph Vaughan Williams*, p. 186.

raided it for the first tune of the Scherzo of the String Quartet in A minor and for the part-song 'The New Commonwealth'. His other film scores are *The People's Land* of 1943, *The Story of a Flemish Farm* (1943) which curiously enough has some connexion with the Sixth Symphony, and *Stricken Peninsula* (1945).

The music for a film is usually too fragmentary to make a concert suite, as is done so often and so successfully with incidental music for plays, but the composer may very well be anxious to salvage from oblivion some happy inspiration, some pregnant theme, some fine tune. The tune which Vaughan Williams recovered from *49th Parallel* and converted into 'The New Commonwealth' is such a tune, a big striding tune melodically very compact with repeated notes but given wings by rhythmic flexibility, and harmonized in the style of a hymn. The words, which were inspired by the war emotions of 1943, when hope was succeeding to grim determination, are from the pen of Harold Child, the composer's old collaborator in *Hugh the Drover*. The other survivor is the viola theme short and marcato in the string quartet (see Ex. 1, p. 218).

The record preserving some of the music of *The Loves of Joanna Godden* contains the following captions: Romney Marsh; Joanna Godden; Sheepshearing; Work on the Farm; The Fair; Martin drowned at Dungeness; Ellen and Harry Trevor; Adoption of Motherless Lamb; Burning of the Sheep; Reunion. The Burning of the Sheep episode drew from the composer the remark that this was the only time in his long career that he had been asked to set foot-and-mouth disease to music. The drowning incident produced the kind of music that was afterwards in an enhanced degree written for the Antarctic film—both use wordless female voices to convey a sense of desolation. The other subjects show how it is possible in a few bars to set a scene, depict a mood, sketch an episode, and also how such vignettes, vivid and even perfect as they may be, are useless for any other purpose as they stand. The *Sinfonia Antartica* however shows that regarded as raw material they can be recomposed into an extended composition. But this is a supreme exception to a general rule that such episodic music has no inner vitality of its own and, owing to formal restriction that

precludes repetition and development, is incapable of achieving independence of the film.

The relationship of the film music of *Scott of the Antarctic* to the Sinfonia that was evolved out of it is traced in detail in the analysis of the Sinfonia on pp. 68–9. The episodes which were recorded are named Prologue, Pony March, Penguins, Climbing the Glacier, The Return, Blizzard, Final Music. Of these seven, four are used in the symphony—the Prologue (with voices) depicting the Antarctic, the Penguins in the Scherzo, Climbing the Glacier at the opening of the symphony, and the Blizzard in the finale.

The Flemish Farm has left two traces behind in the Sixth Symphony and in a separate suite. The suite has been overlooked and had hardly any performances, but the opening of the second and fourth movements of the Sixth Symphony drew thematically on motifs originally conceived in connexion with the film—whether they were used eventually in the actual film as exhibited the composer does not remember. The orchestra irreverently described the one (see Ex. 7 of Symphony No. 6) as 'Two hot sausages', a phrase which is a verbal embodiment of the rhythm and, apparently, though this was not more than a suggestion, the fugue subject owed something to a theme in the film dubbed by the orchestra 'Miserable Starkey'. So this film at any rate provided raw material that was to be put to more exalted use.

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